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TAPPA'S *supposed to be the* IN-TAS
a formidable people

Crootoohoontoo

Bogadó

Ketoo

KINGDOM OF DAHOMY

Whose King Guadja Trudo, *Conquered the Kingdoms of Ardrah and Whydah in 1727.*

Sarrachee

MAHEES

Zassa

Abomey *the Capital of Dahomy*

Dawhee, the Capital of Foy

Fouin *or* Foy *the antient Country of the Dahomans then called Foys*

Calmina where the King often resides

Boagry

Agrimey

Foy

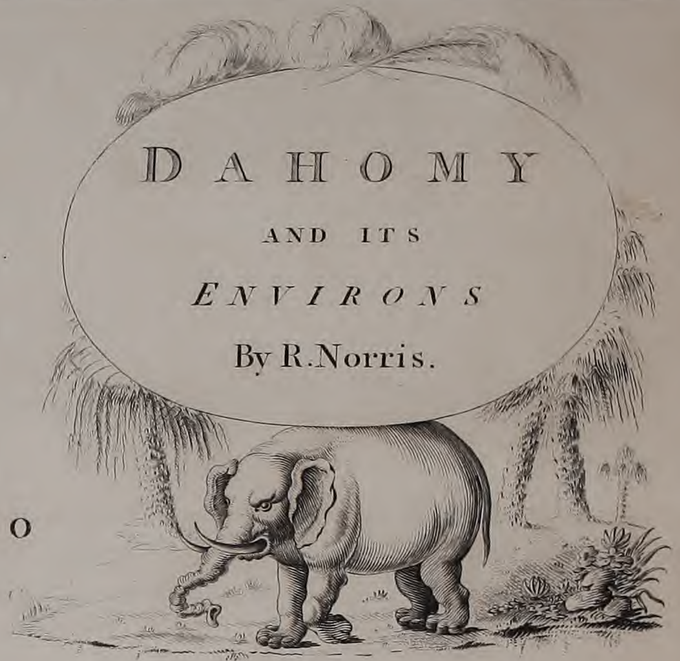
Whydow

Little Havee

Great Havee

AYOES
or
EYOES *perhaps* GAGOES
a warlike people to the Northward of this

DAHOMY
AND ITS
ENVIRONS
By R. Norris.



JABOO

KINGDOM OF BENIN

Ardrah *or* Alladah *a great Town with a Palace*

Ajirrah

ARDRAH
dzowey

Torre

Wemey

Assem *or* Great Ardrah *the Capital of* Ardrah *& a Place of Great Trade*

WHYDAH

Lagoon or Sabee

Portuguese Settlement

Mount

British Fort

Whydah

Road

Wosca

Badagry

Ladoo R.

Kingdom of Lagos *which is tributary to Benin*

Doo R.

R. Palmer

Cradoo

Cradoo Lake

Lagos

Quassee

Red topped Trees

POPOE

Gingli

The Four Hills

Little Popoe

Ground Popoe

Porto Novo

Upper Whydah

Badagry Road

West R.

River Lagos

Oddy

Benin R.

Porto or Popoe R.

Creek open only in the Rains.

Tuffo, lies 6 Miles West of the Mouth of the River Volta.

Rio da Volta *commonly* River Volta *so called by the Portuguese from the Velocity of its Stream*

Acquiaw

Danish Fort

ACCRAH *a very large Quarter*

Town

Adda Castle

Danish

Weedy Bluff

A bare sandy Shore with a few straggling Bushes.

Cape St Pauls
Lat.de 5°. 52'. N.

The tremendous breakers at the mouth of the R. Volta have prevented Vessels from entering till very lately, when an American brig made good her passage and found 10 or 12 feet water on the Bar.

Benin R.

Gato *a place of Trade*

Lagos Creek

Aguana

Jaboo Creek

Lagos Creek

Arabo

Ragie Great

River Formosa

New Town

Salt Town Cattabarra

Waree Creek

R. Waree or R. dos Forcados

Waree or Awery
called also Oery

WAREE

Rabbs Factory on the River of Slaves.

BIGHT of BENIN

N
W E
S

Scale of 69½ Miles to a Degree
5 10 20 30 40 50

North Latitude

Degrees of Longitude East from Greenwich

R. Norris del.t

Published March 1.st 1793 for James Evans, N.o 32 Paternoster Row

Woodman & Medlow Sculp.t

THE

HISTORY

OF

DAHOMY,

AN INLAND KINGDOM OF AFRICA;

COMPILED FROM

AUTHENTIC MEMOIRS;

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.

By ARCHIBALD DALZEL, Esq.

GOVERNOR AT CAPE-COAST CASTLE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY T. SPILSBURY AND SON, SNOWHILL;

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M.DCC.XCIII.

WELLCOME
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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES LORD HAWKESBURY,

PRESIDENT

OF

THE LORDS OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL,

OF TRADE AND PLANTATIONS, *&c. &c. &c.*

MY LORD,

I DO myſelf the honour, in conſequence of Your Lordſhip's permiſſion, to dedicate this *Hiſtory of Dahomy* to Your Lordſhip, as the only proof which, at this diſtance, I can give of my gratitude for your uncommon attentions; and as a ſincere teſtimony of the many advantages which I daily ſee reſult to the Britiſh Commerce and Shipping, from Your Lordſhip's Commercial Legiſlation.

 Permit

Permit me only to add, that I ſhall in every ſituation endeavour to prove myſelf worthy of being conſidered as,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt faithful,

And moſt devoted Servant,

Archibald Dalzel.

Cape-Coaſt-Caſtle, Africa,
26 June, 1793.

PREFACE.

THE contemplation of man, in the various ſituations and under the different circumſtances in which he from time to time preſents himſelf to our view, is one of the nobleſt employments of the philoſophic mind, as it immediately leads to that ſelf-knowledge which deſervedly holds the pre-eminence over all others, and which cannot be obtained without it.

To arrive at a juſt knowledge of human nature, a progreſs through the hiſtory of the ruder nations is eſſentially neceſſary. It is from the actions of mankind, when ſeen under little other controul than that of their own will, that the tendency and effects of the paſſions appear more clearly and truly, than when under the influence and reſtraint of the laws of refinement: nor is there any other way to judge of the value of cultivation, in the eſtimate of human happineſs, than by this kind of compariſon.

But the hiſtory of ſavage nations is very difficult to be obtained. Themſelves have no records; nor, without other incitement, will travellers more cultivated remain long enough among them, to become acquainted with their language, cuſtoms, manners, and opinions, to form a true picture of a people. Scraps haſtily

haſtily picked up and ill underſtood, put into form by a fertile imagination, conſtitute moſt of thoſe works that are offered under ſuch name: whence ariſe the many ſtrange notions and prejudices that we are apt to entertain of thoſe people, and to refute which nothing is wanted, but a reſidence for a due time amongſt them. It therefore becomes neceſſary to ſay ſomething concerning the following Work, in order to ſhew the ground of credibility it ſtands on, and to give the reader a ſufficient confidence in the truth and candour with which the facts are repreſented. For this purpoſe, the names of the Authors alone would be ſufficient to thoſe acquainted with them: to others it will be neceſſary to mention, that the late Mr. *Robert Norris*, of Liverpool, whoſe death, ſince the writing of this book, is juſtly regretted by all who knew him, was eighteen years in the African trade, was well acquainted with the language and cuſtoms of the people, and was indefatigable in obtaining, from both blacks and whites, the memoirs from which his part of the work was written. Beſides, his own obſervation furniſhed many curious and intereſting facts, as will be found in his hiſtory of Ahadee, and his journey to Abomey in 1772, which are here a ſecond time printed, with many corrections and emendations, finiſhed during his laſt illneſs.

The life of Adahoonzou II. and the beginning of the reign of Wheenoohew, the preſent king of Dahomy, are collected from the communications of *Lionel Abſon*, Eſq. the preſent Britiſh Governor at Whydah; of whom we need only ſay, that he has been ſeven and twenty years reſident on the coaſt, and upwards of twenty in the preſent government; where, from his ſituation, and a thorough acquaintance with the people and their language,

guage, he has been enabled to obtain every information he could desire, or they afford; and this the more readily, as his great knowledge is found no less useful to them, than to his employers.

Mr. *Dalzel* had collected these, and written the Introduction, when, his duty calling him to Cape Coast, he was obliged to leave the care of the press to a friend; a circumstance the more to be regretted, as his great intelligence in the subject, had he been present, might have afforded it a higher degree of perfection than it has now to boast of: his competence to such a task cannot be doubted, after reading the Introduction just mentioned, the result of near thirty years observation, seven of which he was resident in Guinea, and four of these Governor at Whydah, in which government he was succeeded by Mr. Abson.

Before leaving England, in 1792, he conceived that the addition of the preceding reigns would render the work more complete, and so, more worthy the liberal encouragement of his numerous friends. This part therefore is supplied, from all the authors that could be found who had treated of the subject; but principally from Snelgrave, whose style carries with it the irresistible evidences of truth, which are simplicity and candour. How it is executed, is submitted to the judgment of the reader. If it does not disgrace the rest of the Work, the writer is satisfied; and whilst he declares that he has used his utmost pains to prevent censure, he does not offer himself as a candidate for praise, nor wishes to lay claim to any part of the book but its errors.

This

This Work, conſidered as a collection from ſeveral writers, will doubtleſs require much indulgence for the inequality of the ſtyle, for a few repetitions that might otherwiſe have been avoided, and for ſome errors of the preſs, which great care has not been able to obviate. But Candour is the boſom-friend of Judgment; and the Editor, pleading a deſire to pleaſe, need not fear pardon where he has failed, when aſſiſted by ſuch an advocate. Even the title might have appeared more ſuitable to the Work, had it been Memoirs, rather than Hiſtory: to which laſt it can claim no other right, but that of containing every thing hiſtorical that its collectors could find relating to Dahomy. The Notes generally ſhow the authorities from which they are taken; thoſe marked with R. N. were given by Mr. Norris; thoſe with A. D. by Mr. Dalzel; and the few with J. F. were thoſe added after his departure: when they are without theſe marks, they belong to the writer of the text referring to them.

The curious fruit mentioned in the Introduction, and to which I have given the name of *oxyglycus*, I find was known to Des Marchais, who deſcribes it* as a little red fruit, which, being chewed, gives a ſweet taſte to the moſt ſour or bitter things. But he miſtakes, where he ſays that the ſeed is much like pear-kernels; for ſome of the natives of Cape Coaſt, with whom I have lately converſed, affirm, with Mr. Dalzel, that it is a ſtone-fruit; that it is called *aſſabah* on that part of the coaſt; and that it grows on a tall ſhrub, not on a tree, the fruit hanging down in cluſters, like the cherries of the laurel. This muſt be diſtinguiſhed from the

* Tom. II. p. 203; & vide Prevoſt, Tom. IV. p. 350.

the *kola*, or *boeſi*, mentioned by ſeveral authors, as giving a reliſh to water or palm wine; which grows on lofty trees, as this was ſaid to do; but which, to Boſman, ſeemed to be a ſpecies of the *areka*, or *beetle**.

Similar to our account of the ceremony uſed in dooming the King of Eyeo to death†, and of its conſequences, is that related by Diodorus Siculus, in his deſcription of the Ethiopians. It is not, ſays this hiſtorian, the cuſtom of the kings of Ethiopia, to put their ſubjects, though condemned, to death. They ſend to the criminal, by the proper meſſenger, a *token* of his doom; which he reſpectfully receives, and, retiring to his own houſe, kills himſelf. To which we may add, that there were ſome caſes where this mode was practiſed in other countries; but that which moſt applies to our inſtance, is what follows. In like manner, continues he, did the prieſts at Meroë act towards the king himſelf; for when they wiſhed to be rid of him, they had only to acquaint him, that the oracle of the Gods, whoſe will, they told him, no mortal ought to diſpute, had decreed, that he ſhould put himſelf to death: a ſummons which never met with reſiſtance till the time of the ſecond Ptolemy; when *Ergamenes*, one of their kings, whoſe mind had been improved by the learning and philoſophy of the Greeks, on receiving ſuch an imperious and dreadful meſſage, inſtead of compliance, led his army to the city of Arata, the reſidence of the prieſts, and the ſeat of their golden temple, where he deſtroyed the whole knot of them and their adherents, and for ever abolithed the cuſtom.

* Boſman, p. 287. † Vide Hiſt. p. 12, 156.

This meſſage was no doubt accompanied with the ſame formalities as in other inſtances; and ſome token ſent to the king, to confirm the ſentence, as well as to give it authenticity; which token, though it might not be the ſame with that uſed at Eyeo, ſtill produces a coincidence in a very extraordinary cuſtom, that for countries ſo diſtant, and times ſo remote, muſt appear very remarkable. Nay, ſo many inſtances of this kind are found, between the cuſtoms and ceremonies of different and diſtant parts of Africa, that we are often led to conclude there muſt, at an early period, have been an intercourſe between them. Time has eraſed the æra from the page of hiſtory; but the veſtiges of ſuch an intercourſe may ſtill be perceived in facts of this ſtriking nature.

Moreover, when we conſider that the beſt hiſtorians affirm the Nigritians to have been the firſt inhabitants of Africa, and that the tawny people were interlopers; we may as reaſonably ſuppoſe thoſe cuſtoms to have originated amongſt the inhabitants, as amongſt their invaders, and to have travelled *towards* the North, rather than from it. There is no more reaſon to ſuppoſe Nigritia to have been always in its preſent ſtate of ignorance and barbarity, than Ethiopia, Egypt, and Greece; only that the period of its grandeur is farther removed. The fall of refinement into barbariſm, we well know, is much more rapid than its riſe; and this, becauſe when refinement is carried beyond a certain pitch, it evaporates the metal as well as the droſs; enervates the body, ſo as to unfit it for the hardy reſiſtance of violence; and renders the mind ſo light, that it becomes the plaything of every plauſible wind that may be directed againſt it.

On

On the other hand, we have no more reaſon to ſuppoſe the Phœnicians or Ethiopians to have been always the ſame cultivated people that they were in the times of Solomon, Alexander, and Ptolemy, than to ſuppoſe the ſame of Britain from its preſent ſtate; when we know, that ſcarce 2000 years are elapſed, ſince the chief ornament of our politeſt ladies, was the length of their hair, and the blue tattooing of their bodies.

I would not here be underſtood as intimating, that all the ſimilar cuſtoms of Guinea, and the northern or eaſtern nations of Africa, took their riſe in the ſouth; becauſe many of them ſhew the contrary, having an immediate relation to Mahommedaniſm, and ſuch as have evidently been introduced ſince the Hegira; partly by the incurſions of the Arabs, and other nations, partly by commercial intercourſe: it is only to thoſe of ſuch a nature as this juſt mentioned, that we would apply our hypotheſis.

The map is that of Mr. Norris, with a few additions; which, for the places on the coaſt, and the poſition of Abomey, is near enough to the truth; but in the internal parts is far from being diſcriminate: the ſituations, much more the boundaries, of many of the kingdoms mentioned in our hiſtory, being very imperfectly known to the Europeans, or even to the Dahomans themſelves, as I have had occaſion to obſerve in ſeveral of the Notes. Even the diſtance between the ſame two places is differently ſtated by thoſe who have travelled over it. For inſtance, from Whydah beach to Abomey, which is perhaps the moſt beaten track, by Europeans, of any in Africa, the di-

ſtance is reckoned, by Mr. Lambe to be 200 miles; whilſt Mr. Norris makes it 112, and Mr. Dalzel only 96. Nor is this all; the very names of the ſame place are as diſcordant as the poſitions or diſtances. *Whydah*, as it is pronounced by the natives, who ſound the *w* of it ſtrong, like that in *whip*, the French write Juida; the Dutch, Fida, &c. Eyeo is written many different ways, as may be ſeen in the Notes; but not in that which I preſume is the right one, viz. Gago. Snelgrave miſtakes Mahee for Eyeo, which he calls Yahoo; very near to the Arabian ſound of Gago. *Gago*, ſo called by Leo, is written *Kuku*, by the tranſlators of the Nubian Geographer, and *Gugoo* by the African diſcoverers. Aſſiante, ſounded Aſhantee, is by ſome called Inta; which country I conjecture to be our Tappah: and many other ſynonyma are to be found, much more diſſimilar in their appearance than theſe. So that under ſuch conſiderations it proves oftentimes very difficult to aſcertain, either from books or travellers, the identity of many towns and countries: as I have experienced, in common with others who have undertaken that labour; and of which more hereafter. This being the caſe, we muſt be indebted to circumſtances, and ſometimes to conjecture, for the probable, when we cannot obtain the actual, ſituation of places: and from theſe helps we have been led to conclude the identity of Dauma and Dahomy; of Gago and Eyeo; of In-Ta and Ta-pah; and to give a poſition of theſe from Abomey, and from each other, different in the Notes from thoſe found in the body of the Work; as I did not think proper to alter that without greater certainty. There is one error, however, that ſhould be corrected; I mean the latitude of Abomey, which, in the ſecond page of the Introduction, is ſaid to lie in 9 degrees 50 minutes north, agreeable

to

to its place in former maps; but which ſhould have been 7 degrees 59 minutes north, in conformity to our own.

I ſhall now account for the reaſons that induced me to adopt theſe different names, as ſynonyma, that this liberty may not appear the mere effect of imagination, and in hopes that I may thereby ſave ſome trouble to future enquirers: the difficulty attending on almoſt every inveſtigation relative to the interior African geography being ſuch, that to travel through Nigritia on paper, is almoſt as dreary and devious as through the country itſelf.

The identity of Dauma and Dahomy, is clearly proved from their ſituation, which on all the maps is the ſame, viz. on the eaſtern ſide of, and adjacent to, the river Volta; though it is not eaſy to trace by what means the ancient geographers obtained the knowledge of its poſition ſo truly. It muſt be obſerved, that the name of Dauma does not occur in any author, nor in any map that I have ſeen, till after the appearance of Leo's Deſcription of Africa; for in 1561 it is not to be found in the maps of Ruſcelli; though even the Latin tranſlation of Leo, which muſt have been ſubſequent to the author's edition, had then been publiſhed ſix years: yet it is in the Planiſphere of P. Plancius, dated 1594, and in the Atlas of G. Mercator, who died in that year: ſo that it was probably introduced by *Sanutus*, who is ſtyled the exacteſt divider of Africa, and whoſe Geography was publiſhed at Venice in 1588. If ſo, for I have not the book, this author ſeems to have had further information than that afforded by Leo; for he has not only placed the kingdom of Dauma in the very ſituation it is now found to occupy, but even the capital of the ſame name in about nine degrees

degrees north, in which he has been followed by moſt of the ſubſequent geographers, and which anſwers near enough to the latitude of Abomey: whereas Leo* only makes a general mention of this, with ſeveral other kingdoms, which he ſays are on the ſouth of Nigritia.

There is a circumſtance that, though perhaps it may only be the engraver's error, is too remarkable to be paſſed over; which is, that the town Dauma is in Plancius's map† ſpelt *Dauina*. If this be intentional, the near coincidence of this ſound with Dawhee, the former capital, is ſtill more extraordinary.

In the maps belonging to Sir Jonas Moore's Mathematics, publiſhed in 1681, which were reviſed and prepared for the preſs by Dr. Halley, and ſaid to be taken from the *neweſt* geographers extant, we ſtill find both the kingdom and town of Dauma preſerving their former poſition; and it is not till after the publication of the Doctor's own map, in 1700, that they are ſupplanted by Ardra and other places; which, as they were found by himſelf or other navigators to lie along the coaſts, were too haſtily ſuppoſed to run far inland: but the conqueſt of Ardra and Whydah, by the Dahomans, in 1727, once more brought to light this ancient and warlike people; and replaced their kingdom in its former ſituation, with the ſlight alteration of the name from Dauma to Dahomy, as it was given by Captain Snelgrave.

In

* Leo, Book I. Chap. i.

† This map is in one ſheet, and is probably a contraction of his larger one, publiſhed in 1592, which I have not.

In many maps there is another kingdom of Dauma, conſiderably to the eaſtward of this, of which no account has hitherto, I believe, been given. Sanutus himſelf places the ſecond Dauma with the other kingdoms of Gothan and Medra, between Gaogo, Borno, and a country as little known as either of thoſe it bounds, called *Judæorum terra*. But the inconſtant poſition of this latter Dauma in the maps, and the determinate one of ours, renders ſuch ambiguity worth no more than the mere mention.

As to the name of Fouin, or Foy, which the natives ſay was formerly that of Dahomy, it might be another appellation of the ſame country, like that of England for Britain, &c. with the conſideration of which I ſhall neither tire myſelf nor the reader.

The poſition of Dahomy, or Dauma, once determined, it will not be difficult, I think, to inveſtigate that of Eyeo. The Dahomans ſay, it is to the N. E. of Aſſem, or Great Ardra; but whether to the N. E. or N. W. thus much is certain, that it is to the northward, and that it muſt be a nation immediately adjoining to Dahomy; ſince there is no mention throughout our Hiſtory of any intermediate one, which muſt have been the caſe, had it exiſted, from its interference in ſome of the many tranſactions that have paſſed between the two kingdoms. It is the common opinion, that the mutual boundary of Eyeo and Dahomy, is part of that chain of mountains which forms a line of ſeparation between a great part of Nigritia and Guinea. Now the only country adjoining to Dahomy on the north, and bearing any affinity to Haiho, or Eyeo, is Gago; which preſerved its vicinity to the river Volta, and conſequently to Dahomy, till within

* Vide Magini Geographiæ Pars ſecunda, Ed. 1617, p. 187.

within a few years; when new names induced geographers, perhaps too haſtily, to diſturb the former poſition of places. From Plancius to the time of Senex, Gago is the N. W. boundary of Dahomy. In D'Anville, Gago is changed to Gogo, and removed further to the northward; as it is, under the name of Gugoo, in the late map of Major Rennel, added to the diſcoveries of the African Aſſociation. Before theſe authors, I believe, there is no intermediate country found between Gago and Dahomy; nor perhaps would there yet, if our late information had been more accurate.

As to the difference in form between the two words, it may have ariſen from the different manners of repreſenting Arabic words in Roman characters, or of different nations repreſenting the ſame ſound. In the former caſe, it is very eaſy to make ſuch a miſtake, as theſe three ſounds, viz. G, ſoft*, Hh, and Ch, are repreſented in Arabic by the ſame character, with the help only of a ſingle point;† and that the latter is often the fact, I have already ſhewn in ſeveral inſtances.

But Snelgrave ſays, from the information of the Portugueſe Mulatto found at the court of Trudo, that Eyeo is "many "days journey off, beyond a great and famous lake, which is "the fountain of ſeveral large rivers, that empty themſelves "into the Bay of Guinea." Let us conſider this deſcription. Aſſem, or Ardra, where our Author then was, is diſtant from Gago,

* This is nearly the Engliſh ſound of E aſpirated, or He. Moore ſays, the kingdom called Ghana, by the Nubian Geographer, is ſounded Yany by the natives. Travels, p. 15; et v. Appendix, p. 6, 66.

† Walton. Introduc. ad Lection. Linguar. Orientalium.

Gago, in Senex's map,* twelve or fourteen days journey, at about twenty miles per day: but then it is conſiderably to the ſouth-weſt of the lake alluded to, if by ſuch lake be meant that called by ſome writers Guarda, or Sigeſmes: which lake alſo has had ſeveral names and places, till at laſt it has vaniſhed; for the ſmall lake found near Ghanah, in Major Rennel's map, differs too much in ſituation to be conſidered as its remains: it might rather be taken for thoſe of Ptolemy's lake Lybia.

The middle of the lake Sigeſmes, according to Senex, lies in about 13 degrees north and 5 degrees eaſt of London; conſequently, it is ſomething to the eaſtward of Ardra; but it does not ſeem to hold a place in the ancient maps. Ptolemy has no one that correſponds to this ſituation; though ſome have placed it near his lake Lybia, and others, to that which he calls Nigrites: to this laſt, one part of Snelgrave's deſcription beſt anſwers, as they generally make it the ſource of many rivers.

Ptolemy places the lake Nigrites at the north-weſt extremity of the river Niger, cloſe to the Mandrian mountains; on the other ſide of which is the head of the Maſſa; which river nearly anſwers in poſition to that of the river Senegal.

Who firſt diſcovered this lake, or who gave it the name of Sigeſmes, or Guarda, I know not. It is neither in Edriſi nor

* I ſhall here uſe Senex's map of Africa, engraved in 1740 for Poſtlethwaite's Dictionary, as a very good one for the time, and better adapted for our purpoſe than thoſe of more modern date, from its correſpondence with former writers: in which point of view the old map of H. Moll will alſo be found very uſeful.

Leo; yet it was known before Sanutus, as I find it in Ruſcelli's modern maps, annexed to his edition of Ptolemy's Geography, which was printed at Venice in 1561. He alſo lays down the Niger lake, which he deſcribes as the ſource of two rivers: that running to the northward he calls Rio de l'Oro, which opens into the Atlantic Ocean in about the latitude of 19 degrees North; the other, with a ſouth-weſt courſe, joins the ſame ocean in about 8 degrees North.

Barbot, who wrote in the latter end of the laſt century, gives the fulleſt account of this lake, that I have met with in any author. He ſays, the ableſt geographers of this age, after much conteſting about it, agree, that the Niger runs in a body from the lake Sigeſmes, or of Guarda, which extends about 100 leagues from eaſt to weſt, and about 50 from north to ſouth; and lies in about twelve and a half degrees of North latitude from London, and between the 4th and 9th degrees of Eaſt longitude. This lake, purſues he, ſome ſay, waters Mandingo, Guber, and Gago, on the ſouth; and Agadez and Cano on the north; and from it runs to the weſtward the continuation of the Niger, that is then called the Iça, or Sanaga, and which, at Cantorſi, or Cantozi, divides into ſeven branches. Theſe he enumerates: two, he ſays, are the rivers Senegal and Gambia; the others are, Rio St. Joao, Rio St. Domingo, Rio Grande, and its two branches, the Guinala and Biguba. Though, he obſerves, that this diviſion is diſputed by others, who hold, that none of theſe proceed from the Niger*; which ſeems to be the preſent opinion.

* Barbot's Deſcription of the Coaſts of North and South Guinea.—Churchill's Voyages, Vol. V.

Be

Be that as it may, this poſition and general deſcription is near enough to that aſſigned by Snelgrave; for by calculation I find the middle of the Sigiſmes lake bears from Ardra about N.N.E. diſtance 374 miles; which, at twenty miles per day, is nineteen or twenty days journey, and ſo far agrees with the Dahoman account.

As to the flowing of the rivers ariſing from this lake into the Gulph of Guinea, it is perhaps a mixed idea. In Ruſcelli, the Volta, and ſeveral other rivers that run to the ſouth, ſeem to have their ſources near this lake; and perhaps a ſight of his map, or of the information from whence it was drawn, may have led to ſuch expreſſion. Certain it is, the old geographers have deſcribed the Niger to abound in lakes; though this ſeems to be a doubt with the moderns. Perhaps both may be right. The overflowing of the Niger may in time have produced ſtrange changes in the country; eſpecially as its courſe has had no interruption from human induſtry: and we might inſtance the environs of the Caſpian Sea, and ſeveral places within the limits of our own enquiry, where great changes have been made in the face of the country from rapid waters frequently overflowing their banks. Major Rennel has explained this in a very ingenious way, in a paper on the Ganges and Burrampooter rivers, publiſhed in the 71ſt volume of the Philoſophical Tranſactions. And Mr. Beaufoy, in his account of the African Diſcoveries, mentions a river near Teſſouwa, to the eaſtward of Mourzouk, that was overwhelmed by the moving ſands; which the perſon who, in 1789, gave this information, remembered a deep and rapid ſtream.

From all which it appears, that the former, if not the preſent, exiſtence of ſuch a lake is eſtabliſhed; that it is many days journey from Ardra, is the ſource of many great rivers, and that Gago is in its neighbourhood; all which, anſwering to the poſition and deſcription that are aſſigned to Eyeo, by Snelgrave and the Dahomans, prove the identity of theſe two places, as exactly as can be expected from information ſo dark and confuſed as is every part of that relating to the geography of the interior Africa.

The only powerful neighbour to Gago, is Aſſiante, or Inta; which is particularly deſcribed, about the year 1700, by Boſman and Barbot*, as a country then but lately known to the Europeans; abounding in gold, and bordering on Gago, N. E. by N. and as an inſtance of its greatneſs, Boſman tells us, that in two battles with the Dinkirans, its neighbours, there were ſlain on both ſides upwards of an hundred thouſand men; that Dinkira was deſtroyed by them, and lay then in ruins. This induced me to think, that In-Ta and Ta-pah, as well as Aſſiante, might mean the ſame place, as we find of Mahee and Yahou, &c. eſpecially as none other can be found in the neighbourhood of Gago able to ſtand in competition with it.

I have dwelt perhaps too long on ſo barren a ſubject; but was fearful, by the aſſertion of what was merely hypothetical, that I might juſtly incur cenſure, if I did not ſhew the reaſons for my opinion; therefore I have gone into this detail, that the reader might the better judge for himſelf. The inveſtigation has been attended

* Boſman, 56, 57. Barbot, 451.

attended with much more labour than recompence; but I think thoſe who pretend to inform others, ſhould take great care that themſelves are not deceived; not only becauſe by ſuch inattention they propagate error, but becauſe they moſt deceive thoſe who place the greateſt confidence in them.

The principal impediment to the improvement of the geography of Africa, ſeems rather to ariſe from the jealouſy of the inhabitants of the ſea-coaſts, in permitting white men to travel through their country, than from the danger or difficulty attending the penetration: though it muſt be confeſſed that it cannot be entirely ſafe to venture through regions, where the people are often as ſavage as the beaſts of prey. This jealouſy originates in their fears, leſt either the advantages of their trade with Europe ſhould be leſſened, or perhaps transferred, from them to their neighbours; or that the inland kingdoms, already very powerful, by obtaining European arms might rule them at their pleaſure. There are many inſtances in former writers, of their care and cunning, in concealing from travellers the names and nature of the adjacent countries, and even of the remote parts of their own; nor do we find that the ſame propenſity is abated at the preſent hour. As to their apprehenſions relative to the inland countries, our very hiſtory owes its riſe to them: the oppoſition of Ardra and Whydah to the interference of the Dahomans with their trade, cauſed them to hazard and loſe their political exiſtence.

Perhaps a better map of the internal parts here ſpoken of, might have been afforded by Mr. Abſon, had we entertained an idea, that there would have been time enough before the Work had

had been printed off, to have availed ourſelves of the communication; though, from what has been ſaid, this may appear problematical.

Indeed, I am of opinion, that the Northern trading Moors, or *Mallays*, as they are called, will be the only inſtruments whereby the geography of Nigritia, and the ſouthern provinces, will ever be completely obtained; as they come through the interior parts, travel every where, are well received, and conſequently want only an intelligent and attentive mind, to render them every way competent to the undertaking. No doubt but our conſuls and merchants, ſituated along the northern coaſts, may be able to find men of this deſcription, who, for a certain advantage, would be glad to collect all the information neceſſary for our purpoſe.

The Mallays, ſo called, ſeem to anſwer to the deſcription of the Julapes, or Jalabs, mentioned in the Lords Report, and by Mr. Lediard, as travelling merchants, and as the ſources of great information; though perhaps they may be only ſtragglers from the caravans, ſlaves, delinquents, or anomalous beings, who prefer a vagabond life; for they do not ſeem, from any of our accounts, to have a ſettled plan of reviſiting the ſame place, at regular periods, like merchants, though they ſometimes wear a mercantile appearance. Perhaps they are of the ſame kind with thoſe Arabian teachers mentioned by Mr. Penny, in the report juſt now alluded to, concerning the ſlave trade, as coming down from the Mahometan ſtate of Fula, to Sierra Leone, with their tranſcripts of the Alcoran to ſell, probably as charms, and at the ſame time to propagate Mahomedaniſm, as far as their perſonal

ſonal ſafety might allow. Certain it is, they poſſeſs not only the art of writing, but other uſeful arts unknown to the ſavages whom they viſit, and for which they are held, by great and ſmall, in very high eſteem.

What they really are, may eaſily be known by our governors at the different forts in Guinea, if the knowledge be thought worth obtaining: eſpecially if it ſhould attract the attention of that laudable Aſſociation lately inſtituted for the purpoſe of diſcovering the internal parts of Africa; whoſe ſucceſs, we heartily wish, may remove the opprobrium with which our ignorance of that country juſtly reproaches this age of enquiry. The caravans purſuing always the ſame route, can do but little towards it; nor is the information of a ſingle traveller, however reputable and diligent, ſufficiently ſecure from error, to be entirely depended upon. Therefore ſuch of our African governors as underſtand Arabic, ſhould be directed to make the neceſſary enquiries of theſe people; and where they have not this language, Moors, acquainted with that and the Engliſh tongue, may be retained, with ſmall expence, at the factories where thoſe Mallays are moſt uſually found, who might interrogate them concerning the countries they have paſſed through, their ſituations, &c. which liberty of converſation, I think, might be obtained from the kings or caboceers, without much difficulty, notwithſtanding what was ſuggeſted to Snelgrave.

Some of theſe people are found as priſoners in different States; and ſome few inſtances have been known, where they have been ſold as ſlaves: one is mentioned by Barbot, and there are two others of which I have received authentic information: but the

firſt

firſt caſe is, when they have been taken in a country at the time of its conqueſt; the ſecond, probably for delinquency; for in general they ſeem to be perfectly at liberty to go and come, when and where they pleaſe.

The ſubject of the *Slave-Trade* has purpoſely been avoided. Not only becauſe it has been a topic of public diſcuſſion, but even of controverſy; which may well render any thing that might have been ſaid about it here unneceſſary. Yet as the zeal for the abolition of this trade is held out, and I hope truly, as proceeding from philanthropy, I could not avoid the opportunity of directing that valuable principle to its proper object, in Chap. V. and VII. of the reign of Trudo; where I hope I ſhall not be blamed for bringing into review things ſomewhat remote from the Dahoman Hiſtory, ſeeing that general propoſitions of this nature require more than a ſingle proof in their demonſtration. And there is a peculiar degree of propriety in inſtancing Mexico, when we ſpeak of the fate of priſoners of war, not only as it was the moſt poliſhed of all the ſavage nations which the Europeans have diſcovered, but alſo the moſt cruel to its captives. Beſides which, it furniſhes inſtances of wars, where the ſole object was that of obtaining victims for ſacrifice, the very thought of which is too ſhocking to endure for a moment. Theſe demonſtrate, beyond the power of contradiction, the propenſity of mankind to war and cruelty; which principles, as human wiſdom can never eradicate, it ſhould employ itſelf, when it has power, in ſo far counteracting, as to make their evil effects the leaſt poſſible: and this will never be done, but by making mercy the *intereſt* of the conqueror. Whatever evils the ſlave-trade may be attended with (and there

is no good without ſome mixture of evil) this we are ſure of, it is mercy to the unfortunate brave; and not leſs to poor wretches, who, for a ſmall degree of guilt, would otherwiſe ſuffer from the butcher's knife; too many inſtances of which have fallen under the conſideration of travellers, and of which more than one occurs in this Hiſtory*. If it were advanced, that the deſire of gain tempts one nation in Africa, or any where elſe, to make depredations on another; we might juſtly anſwer, that ſhould this deſire be obviated, ſome other would excite to the ſame violence. I have already mentioned a war, on a private quarrel between two of theſe countries, wherein there were ſlain, in only two battles, one hundred thouſand perſons; and Boſman relates, that the people of Akim, who came to the aſſiſtance of the Dinkirans in that war, loſt thirty thouſand men†. Nay, look but at the occaſion of all the wars in Europe, the world of refinement, for ſo many centuries back; and then examine the tendency of nations to peace and philanthropy. Compare the cauſe of theſe wars with their effects, and wonder, if you can, at a ſecond ever taking place, after mankind has beheld the folly of the firſt. Nothing leſs than the all-ſeeing eye of a Gallic Philoſopher can unravel ſuch a myſtery; and to him we leave to diſplay, whilſt he is whetting his knife, the natural propenſity of the human mind to harmony and brotherly

 love;

* Boſman tells us, that at Benin, on account of a chain of factitious coral, not worth two-pence, five perſons were put to death. The chain was a royal preſent, which it ſeems it was a capital crime to loſe; ſo that the unfortunate owner ſhared the ſame fate with the thief,—as did three other perſons, for only being privy to the tranſaction. Boſman, p. 406.

† Boſman, p. 67.

love; and the eaſe with which univerſal peace might be eſtabliſhed over all the world—a propoſition ſcarce controvertible throughout all the dominions of *Chimera*.

The delay in the publication of this Volume, though it demands an apology, has neither proceeded from the remiſſneſs of the Editor, nor that of the Printer. Part has ariſen from the avocations of buſineſs; part, from thoſe unavoidable accidents to which every human undertaking is liable; but the greater part, from the time neceſſarily employed on the improvements of the book: and when it is conſidered, how much is now afforded to our generous Subſcribers more than at firſt was promiſed, not only in the addition of the early reigns, but of the copper-plates, and many anecdotes and explanations pertinent to the Work, it is hoped their curioſity will be more than compenſated for the obſtacles to its earlier gratification.

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Roſe, Miſs, Percy-Street, Rathbone Place
Rutſon, Mr. William, Liverpool

S.

Sayer, Mr. Robert, Fleet-Street
Seaman, Mr. Thomas, Liverpool
Setcole, Mr. J. L. Baker's Coffee-Houſe
Shaw, Mr. John, Liverpool
Shoolbred, John, Eſq. Mark Lane
Silveſter, Mr. J. Mancheſter
Simpſon, John, Eſq. Hatton-Court, Threadneedle-Street
Simpſon, Mr. Geo. Alſop's Buildings
Smallwood, Mr. John, Liverpool
Smeton, Mr. R. Harp-Lane
Smeton, Mr. John, Harp-Lane
Spilſbury, Dr. Soho-ſquare
Spilſbury, Mrs.
Stott, Mr. Walter, Liverpool - *F. P.*
Staniforth, Mr. Thomas, Liverpool - *F. P.*
Staniforth, Mr. Charles, Liverpool - *F. P.*
Staniſtreet, Mr. William, Liverpool
Stirling, Capt. Charles, Royal Navy, Bryanſton-Street - - - - - - *F. P.*
Stehelin, General, Royal Artillery, Woolwich - - - - - - - - - *F. P.*
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Stroud, Mr. Edward, Ludgate-Hill
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Swainſon, Peter, Eſq. Carolina Coffee-Houſe

T.

Tarleton, Mr. John, Liverpool - *F. P.*
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DIRECTIONS FOR PLACING THE CUTS.

Place the Map oppoſite the Title-Page.

Plate I. The Levée of the King of Dahomy—oppoſite page viii. of the Introduction.

Plate II. The King marching out at the head of his Armed Women—oppoſite page 54 of the Hiſtory.

Plate III. Human and other Victims devoted for Sacrifice, oppoſite p. 130.

Plate IV. The Grand Proceſſion of the King's Daughters, and others of his Women—oppoſite p. 136.

Plate V. The Laſt Day of the Cuſtoms—oppoſite p. 146.

Plate VI. The Heads of One Hundred and Twenty-ſeven Priſoners of War cut off, to complete the Ornament of the King's Wall—oppoſite p. 190.

ERRATA.

Introduction—p. ii. l. 7, for 9 *degrees* 50 *minutes*, read 7 *degrees*, 59 *minutes*
p. viii. l. 3, after *muſt be*, add *done*.
p. ix. l. 13, for *be*, read *are*.
p. xii. l. 10, et paſſim, for *branches of Cowries*, read *bunches*.
p. xix. l. 1, for *woman*, read *women*.
p. xxiv. bottom, for *hori*, read *ſome*.

Hiſtory—p. 5, l. 1, place the * at Wydah.
l. 2, in the firſt note, for *was*, read *were*.
p. 5, l. 14, dele *that of*.
p. 6, 23, for *north-eaſt*, read *north-weſt*.
p. 7, l. 3, for *where*, read *when*.
p. 12, l. 12, for *of*, read *off*.
p. 16, l. 11, for *preſented*, read *repreſented*.
p. 27, l. 4, for *two thouſand*, read *twenty thouſand*.
—l. 28, end of note 1, for *Smith*, read *Snelgrave*.
p. 31, l. 1, dele *and*.
p. 33, l. 10, for *Manilloes*, read *Manillas*.
Add to the note—Aggery Beads, ſaid to be dug from the earth, are held in high eſtimation, on the Gold Coaſt, and valued at their weight in gold or more. They are either of an uniform colour, green, blue, yellow, or ſpeckled, and very hard.—A. D.
p. 36, Chap. vii. in the contents, after ſacrifices, add A.
p. 42, l. 3, for 400 *hundred*, read 4 *hundred*.
p. 44, l. 1, for *on*, read *long*.
p. 48, in the note, read *This is a more accurate account than any given, &c.*
p. 55, l. 27, for *begun*, read *began*.

Hiſtory—p. 64, l. 16, for *his army*, read *the whole of it*.
for page 66, read 64.
p. 66, line 13, after *outrages*, dele *as is*.
p. 76, l. 4, after *conſtantly*, add *on great occaſions*.
p. 81, l. 26, for *the Abadee*, read *Abadee*.
p. 97, l. 22, for *horror*, read *abhorrence*.
p. 98, l. 5, dele *Kings*.
p. 106, l. 5, read *conduct of the others*.
p. 118, l. 1, for *impaſſible*, read *impoſſible*.
p. 121, l. 6, for *are*, read *is*.
p. 130, l. 20, for *agreeable*, read *agreeably*.
p. 137, l. 25, dele *to*.
p. 143, l. 13, for *ſix or eight*, read *five or ſix*.
p. 156, l. 14, for *ne*, read *be*.
p. 166, l. 15, read *Badagree*.
p. 167, l. 23, for *at*, read *in*.
p. 173, note—after *idiom*, read *ſignifying his titles*.
p. 178, l. 2, for *and probably*, read *and the body probably*.
p. 182, l. 2, for *his*, read *its*.
p. 183, l. 2, and 4, for *which*, read *who*, in both places.
p. 211, l. 22, dele *of*.
p. 214, l. 17, for *lay*, read *lie*.
p. 228, Add a note to the paragraph beginning, *However*, viz.—The account of the death of Mr. Gourg has been ſince contradicted.
p. 229, in the note, for *S. W.* read *N. W.*
p. 229, l. 6, for *prince*, read *people*.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the beginning of the following hiſtory, the etymology of the name of the kingdom of which we are about to treat, is given according to the tradition of the country; which poſſibly may be right, though the tranſaction to which it alludes, may be much earlier than the natives have dated it. For thus much is certain; that the kingdom of *Dauma*, or *Douma*, mentioned by *Leo*, in the latter end of the 15th century, is placed by all the geographers, from that time to the beginning of the preſent century, in the very ſame poſition with the kingdom of Dahomy; that is, on the eaſt ſide of, and nearly adjacent to, the river *Volta*; and extending northwards to the ridge of mountains that ſeparate this kingdom from thoſe of *Guber* and *Gago*.

Whatever may have been the importance of the Dahoman nation, hiſtory affords no marks of it previous to the conqueſt of the maritime kingdoms of *Ardrah* and *Whydah*, between the years 1724 and 1727, as the blacks have no records, but thoſe traditional ones, the legends of their bards; which are ſo politically affected, that they are but little to be depended on: *

* We ſhall find the King frequently forbids tranſactions to be mentioned, that ſeem to reflect ſhame on him or his miniſters, &c. Vide p. 182.

it is from the whites reſident amongſt them, or thoſe who have traded a long time with them, that the true hiſtory of any of the countries on this part of the coaſt can be obtained.

Dahomy, as known at preſent, is ſuppoſed to reach from the ſea coaſt, about 150, or 200 miles inland, though no European has penetrated above half that diſtance; the capital, Abomey, lies in about 9 degrees and 50 minutes of north latitude, and between the 3d and 4th degree of eaſt longitude, reckoned from the meridian of Greenwich.

The face of the country has been thus deſcribed by *Boſman*, *Smith*, and other authors. "The vaſt number and variety of "tall and ſpreading trees, ſeeming as if they had been planted "for decoration; fields of the moſt lively verdure, almoſt wholly "devoted to culture; plains, embelliſhed with a multitude of "towns and villages, placed in full view of the ſurrounding "diſtrict; a gradual and almoſt imperceptible aſcent, to the "diſtance of forty or fifty miles from the ſea, which terminates "the proſpect; formed the moſt picturesque ſcene imagi- "nable, unobſtructed by hill or mountain." This captivating picture of beauty and fertility, was, no doubt, a juſt one, before the conqueſt of *Whydah*; but ſince that period, the different genius of the conquerors has made a very conſiderable change.

The ſoil is a deep, rich clay, of a reddiſh colour, with a little ſand on the ſurface, except about *Calmina*, where it is more light and gravelly: but there is not to be found a ſtone ſo big as an egg in the whole country, ſo far as it has been viſited by

by the Europeans; ſo that a pair of *canky-ſtones*,* weighing together about twelve or fourteen pounds, brought from the diſtance of one hundred miles or more, are ſold at *Grigwhee* for five ſhillings ſterling.

The country abounds with buffaloes, deer, ſheep, goats, hogs, both wild and domeſtic, poultry, of various kinds, particularly *pintados*, or Guinea hens, and Muſcovy ducks; and the lakes are ſtored with plenty of mullets, carp, and other fiſh. The markets are, therefore, well ſupplied with proviſions, beef excepted, which is ſomewhat ſcarce, though produced in the country. The elephant, though its fleſh be coarſe, is made uſe of as food by the natives; and dogs are reared for the ſame purpoſe.

Of farinacious vegetables, the country yields a plentiful ſupply, proportionable to the quantum of culture; namely, maize, millet, or Guinea-corn, of different ſorts; a kind of peas, or rather kidney-beans, called callavances; and alſo a ſpecies of beans, called ground-beans. The *Dahomans*, likewiſe, cultivate yams, potatoes of two ſorts, the caſſada, or *manioka*,† the plantain, and the banana. Pine-apples, melons,

 oranges,

* Uſed for grinding corn, as we do chocolate; ſometimes making it into meal, and ſometimes adding a ſmall quantity of water during the operation, in order to form a paſte, or dough, for immediate uſe. *Canky* is their name for bread.

† The *manioka*, *caſſada*, or *caſſava*, is a plant well known in the Weſt Indies, for the deleterious quality of its juice, which is fatal to hogs, or other animals, that drink it: yet the root is made into a coarſe meal, and uſed for bread,

oranges, limes, guavas, and other tropical fruits, alſo abound in this fertile country.

Nor is it deſtitute of productions adapted for commerce and manufacture; ſuch as indigo, cotton, the ſugar-cane, tobacco, palm oil, together with a variety of ſpices, particularly, a ſpecies of pepper, very ſimilar in flavour, and indeed ſcarcely diſtinguiſhable from the black pepper in the Eaſt Indies.

A very curious fruit, which is produced in Dahomy, as well as in ſome other parts of Africa, muſt not eſcape our notice; eſpecially as neither it, nor the plant to which it belongs, have hitherto been examined ſcientifically; nor can we claſs it botanically, having ſeen no part of the plant when at its maturity, but the fruit. This reſembles a ſmall olive in every reſpect but the colour; being of a duſky, reddiſh hue, changing at the end next the ſtalk, to a faint yellow. * The pulp is firm, and almoſt inſipid; the ſtone is hard, like that of the olive. After having chewed one or more of ſuch berries, and ſpit out or ſwallowed the pulp at pleaſure, a glaſs of vinegar will taſte, to the perſon trying the experiment, like ſweet wine; a lime will ſeem to have the flavour of a very ripe China orange; and the ſame change

bread, by the Portugueſe, as well as by the negroes, in Brazil, where it is called *farinha de pao*, meal of wood, or ſaw-duſt. It is the cheapeſt and leaſt nutritious of all the ſubſtitutes for bread, in the tropical climates; although it has lately been introduced into this country, and is now ſold by the grocers and apothecaries, at a high price, as a pretended remedy for conſumptions, under the name of *Tapioca*.

* The above deſcription anſwers nearly to our common winter cherry; and perhaps it may not be improperly termed, *Ceraſus oxyglycus*. J. F.

change is produced on other acids, the ordinary effects of which upon the palate is deſtroyed in a very unaccountable manner, without efferveſcence, or any ſenſible motion. Indeed, the effect is very different from neutralization, ariſing from the mixture of acid and alkali: ſuch combination producing a neutral ſaline liquor; whilſt this miraculous berry ſeems to convert acids to ſweets. Food or drink, not containing any acid, ſuffer no change by the previous uſe of this fruit; its effect upon acids continues, even after a meal, though in a much ſmaller degree. The natives uſe it, to render palatable a kind of gruel, called *guddee*, which is made of bread, after it becomes too ſtale for any other purpoſe. †

The Dahomans, like the other inhabitants of tropical climates, plant twice a year, viz. at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes; after which, the periodical rains prevail. Indeed they may be ſaid to reap four, or rather two double crops; for ſoon after the *maize* comes above ground, they plant *callavances* in the interſtices between the rows; which practice gives the fields a very beautiful appearance.

The language is that which the Portugueſe call *lingua geral*, or general tongue, and is ſpoken not only in Dahomy-proper, but in Whydah, and the other dependent ſtates; and likewiſe in Mahee, and ſeveral neighbouring places.

With

† The natives deſcribe it as the fruit of a large tree. Plants of ſix or ſeven inches high were raiſed from this fruit, by Mr. *Dalzel*, who tried to carry them from *Angra* to the botanic garden at *St. Vincent's*; but they died on the paſſage. He preſerved the berries in ſpirits, in ſyrup, and in a dry form; but they loſt their ſingular quality in all thoſe preparations. The plant is an evergreen, and the leaves in this infant ſtate are like thoſe of the olive. J. F.

With reſpect to the Dahoman religion, it will hardly be expected that we ſhould be able to ſay much. Like that of many other countries, it conſiſts of a jumble of ſuperſtitious nonſenſe, of which it is impoſſible to convey any ſatisfactory idea to the reader. The Portugueſe word, *feitiço*, or, as the Engliſh pronounce it, *fetiſh*, ſignifying witchcraft, has been adopted by moſt of the maritime natives of Africa, as well as by the Europeans who trade thither. This word at preſent is very comprehenſive in its ſignification, meaning either the ſeveral objects of worſhip, whether ideal or corporal, the act of worſhip itſelf, or the various amulets, charms, and ſuperſtitious mummery of the prieſts, or *fetiſh-men*, who abound in this country. They obſerve no ſabbath, unleſs their market-days, which are conſidered as days of recreation, may be ſo called. Moſt of the ſavage nations have ſome confuſed notion of a Supreme intellectual Being, the maker of the univerſe; but this idea not being eaſily underſtood among a people not much addicted to metaphyſical reaſoning, a variety of corporeal beings have been ſelected as objects of devotion, ſuch as the ſun, moon, living animals, trees, and other ſubſtances. The *tiger* is the *fetiſh* of Dahomy; the *ſnake*, that of Whydah. Among the *amulets*, or *charms*, the principal is, a ſcrap of parchment, containing a ſentence of the *Koran*, which the natives purchaſe from the Moors who viſit this country. This they hang up in their apartments, which are likewiſe decorated with crude, mis-ſhapen images, tinged with blood, beſmeared with palm-oil, ſtuck with feathers, bedaubed with eggs, and other abſurd applications, of which a particular account would be both tedious and unprofitable.

We

We ſhall not, therefore, dwell on the religion, but paſs on to the government and manners of the Dahomans, which deſerve more particularly to be conſidered. The former is the moſt perfect deſpotiſm that exiſts, perhaps, on the face of the earth. The policy of the country admits of no intermediate degree of ſubordination between king and ſlave; at leaſt in the royal preſence, where the prime miniſter is obliged to proſtrate himſelf with as much abject ſubmiſſion as the meaneſt ſubject; all acknowledging the right of the Sovereign to diſpoſe of their perſons and property at pleaſure Beyond the precincts of the palace, indeed, the miniſters enjoy very eminent privileges. It is true, they are forbid the wearing of ſandals, and other ornaments peculiar to royalty; or to uſe ſuch an umbrella as a white man; * yet their inferiors muſt ſalute them with bent knees, and clapping of hands: they may ſit on high ſtools, ride on horſeback, be carried in hammocks, wear ſilk, maintain a numerous retinue, with large umbrellas of their own kind, flags, drums, trumpets, and other muſical inſtruments. But, on their entrance at the royal gate, all theſe inſignia are laid aſide. The ſilk garment is ſubſtituted by a tunic and a pair of drawers, † made of cotton, manufactured in the country; the neck is adorned with a valuable ſtring of coral; a pair of broad, ſilver bracelets encircle the wriſts; at the ſide hangs a ſilver-hilted ſcymitar, while the hand graſps an ivory club.

* See Life of Adahoonzou II. c. 1.

† The neceſſary proſtrations before Majeſty, unavoidably ſoil this garb. The minister muſt, therefore, ſhift at every viſit. Indeed, the Dahomans are at all times very cleanly in their perſons, and particularly ſo, with reſpect to their food, and the utenſils uſed in the kitchen and at table. A very good ſoap is manufactured in the country, of palm oil and pot-aſh.

club. Thus equipped, one of the miniſters of ſtate is always found in waiting at the palace gate; and in this garb only may he enter, which muſt be with the utmoſt caution and reſpect, and not till the monarch's permiſſion be ſignified by one of the women. On his entrance, he crawls towards the apartment of audience, on his hands and knees, till he arrives in the royal preſence, where he lays himſelf flat on his belly, rubbing his head in the duſt, and uttering the moſt humiliating expreſſions. Being deſired to advance, he receives the King's commands, or communicates any particular buſineſs, ſtill continuing in a recumbent poſture; for no perſon is permitted to ſit, even on the floor, in the royal preſence, except the women; and even they muſt kiſs the earth, when they receive or deliver the King's meſſage.

The King's ſons, not excepting the heir apparent, have no rank; being obliged to ſalute the miniſters with clapping of hands, in a kneeling attitude. On ſuch occaſions, however, thoſe officers, out of reſpect to the blood-royal, haſten to take them by the hand, and raiſe them from ſuch an humble poſture.

The King, and all his ſubjects, receive ſtrangers with the moſt remarkable courteſy. Ambaſſadors, from whatever ſtate, are not put to the neceſſity of learning the Dahoman etiquette from the maſter of the ceremonies. Every one ſalutes the Sovereign, according to the faſhion practiſed in his own country. Chairs are placed for European governors, or maſters of ſhips, upon which they ſit, covered, till the King makes his appearance, when they make a bow, ſtanding, and uncovered; after which



The King of Dahomays Levee

which, they reſume their ſeats, and put on their hats. Sometimes the Dahoman Monarch has been known to ſhake hands with an European; but this is a very uncommon mark of royal condeſcenſion, and beſtowed only on ſome great favourite.

White viſitors are always honoured with a glaſs of ſome cordial liquor, filled by the King's own hand; which if refuſed, is apt to give offence.* Favours of this kind are received with avidity by his own ſubjects, not ſo much for the ſake of the liquor as the honour conferred on them. On ſuch occaſions the ſubject lies on his back, while the King holds the bottle to his mouth. In this poſture he muſt drink, till the royal hand be withdrawn; which ſometimes does not happen before the whole contents be emptied, eſpecially when he has a mind to ſport with the drinker.

So great is the veneration of the Dahomans for their Sovereign, that their hiſtory produces no inſtance of a depoſition. The doctrine of paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance is univerſal amongſt them, and the moſt oppreſſive mandates of the Monarch are ſubmitted to without a murmur. The apparent abject humiliation of the miniſters, on the days of public audience, contributes powerfully to keep the people in ſubjection. The

* One of the European governors, on his firſt viſit, being preſented with a glaſs of geneva, declined it. Upon being informed that it was the cuſtom of the country, on ſuch an occaſion, to drink whatever had been filled by the King himſelf, he ſtill begged to be excuſed, giving for a reaſon, that he was indiſpoſed. Upon which the miniſter in waiting drank it off; having firſt poured it out of the King's glaſs into a little callabaſh which he carried about him: as no ſubject muſt drink out of a glaſs in preſence of the King.

lower claſs cannot think that homage unreaſonable which is paid by the firſt officers of the ſtate; whoſe only privilege, in the royal preſence, is that of lying proſtrate, neareſt the King's perſon, and being the medium of communication between him and his inferior ſubjects. For none but high officers muſt converſe immediately with the Sovereign, though near enough to be heard; it being beneath the King's dignity to be addreſſed by, or to ſpeak to, the vulgar. But although this humiliation be rigidly kept up by the miniſters of ſtate, in public, they are allowed to converſe more familiarly at private audiences, where all the public buſineſs, whether legiſlative or executive, is managed.

The King of Dahomy maintains a conſiderable ſtanding army, commanded by an * *Agaow*, or general, with ſeveral other ſubordinate military officers, who muſt hold themſelves in readineſs to take the field upon all occaſions, at the command of the Sovereign. The payment of theſe troops chiefly depends on the ſucceſs of the expeditions in which they are engaged. On extraordinary occaſions, all the males able to bear arms, are obliged to repair to the general's ſtandard; every *Caboceer* marching at the head of his own people. Sometimes the King takes the field, at the head of his troops; and, on very great emergencies, at the head of his women. †

Whatever might have been the proweſs of the *Amazons* among the ancients, this is a novelty in modern hiſtory, which ought

* Perhaps, from the Turkiſh word, *Aga*.

† See Life of Trudo, chap. ix. Life of Adahoonzou, ch. v.

ought not to be ſlightly paſſed over. Within the walls of the different royal palaces in Dahomy, are immured not leſs than *three thouſand women*. Several hundreds of theſe are trained to the uſe of arms, under a female general and ſubordinate officers, appointed by the King, in the ſame manner as thoſe under the Agaow. Theſe warriors are regularly exerciſed, and go through their evolutions with as much expertneſs as the male ſoldiers. They have their large umbrellas, their flags, their drums, trumpets, flutes,* and other muſical inſtruments. In ſhort, the ſingularity of this inſtitution never fails to attract the particular attention of the Europeans, when, among other uncommon exhibitions, they are preſented with the unuſual ſpectacle of a *review* of female troops.

The chief part of the public revenue conſiſts of voluntary gifts, paid by the ſubjects at the time of the † *Cuſtoms*, when the ‡ *Caboceers* and traders attend, bringing their contributions, according to their reſpective circumſtances. Beſides theſe, a duty is levied on commerce; and ſomething ariſes from captives taken in war, of whom, all that are carried to market are ſold

* Little can be ſaid in praiſe of any of their muſical inſtruments, except the flute; which, though the moſt ſimple that can be imagined, being open at both extremities, with a little notch at the mouth end, where it is ſcraped thin, to divide the wind, produces very agreeable notes; and we can aſſert as a fact, however incredible it may ſeem to thoſe modern *cognoſcenti*, who deny that the ancients made uſe of harmony, that the King's women underſtand and practiſe the combination of the perfect concords, thirds and fifths; and their little airs are not inelegant.

† An annual ceremony, which will be explained in its proper place.

‡ From the Portugueze word, *cabeceiro*, a head man.

for the King's account; but as he pays a certain ſum to his troops for every priſoner* they bring in, and as the greateſt part of the captives are put to death, a ſmall proportion only being reſerved for ſale, the amount they produce muſt fall far ſhort of the expence of procuring them.

The well-known ſhells called cowries, which come from the *Maldiva* iſlands, are the currency of the country, where one thouſand are reckoned equal to half a crown. Theſe circulate in the country, looſe; but all diſburſements from the King's houſe are made in branches of *ſtrung* cowries, containing two thouſand each, deducting one fortieth part, as a perquiſite to the King's women for piercing and ſtringing them.†

When any public work is to be done, ſuch as the erection or repairs of royal buildings, the King ſummons his Caboceers, and portions out the labour among them, paying their people for their trouble. Thus the work is performed with great diſpatch. Beſides ſuch neceſſary diſburſements, the King pays a conſiderable yearly tribute, in cowries and merchandiſe, to his formidable neighbour the King of *Eyeo:* part of which is defrayed from the contributions levied upon thoſe ſtates which are tributary to Dahomy. The reſidue of the royal treaſure is, upon various occaſions, diſtributed with a liberal hand among the

* The King pays alſo for the heads of the ſlain.

† For a table of their value, &c. *vide* p. 135, and note. The terms there found, are likewiſe uſed in their other arithmetical computations; thus, when they expreſs an army of 10,000 ſoldiers, they ſay, two cabeſs and a half; or two cabeſs and ten galinas.

the Dahoman grandees, and even among the inferior ſubjects, ſo that the receipts and expenditure are nearly equal; and the money which flows to the royal coffers, from the King's ſubjects and vaſſals, thus circulates again among the people.

The King of Dahomy has ſeveral palaces; each occupying a piece of ground, of nearly a mile ſquare. The deſcription of that at Calmina will ſerve for all the reſt.

This palace, or *Simbomy*, which, in the language of the country, means a great houſe, is ſurrounded with a very ſubſtantial clay wall, of a quadrangular form, and about twenty feet high. In the middle of each ſide is a guard-houſe, with two centinels at the gate, and a guard of armed women and eunuchs within. On the thatched roofs of theſe guard-houſes are ranged, on ſmall wooden ſtakes, many *human ſkulls*. Such of the inner apartments as the Europeans have an opportunity of ſeeing, conſiſt of large courts, communicating with each other, generally ſquare or oblong, encompaſſed by clay walls. In each of them is a ſort of piazza, or ſhed, formed of poſts, about ſeven feet high, planted in the ground, at the diſtance of about twelve or fourteen feet from the wall. The intermediate ſpace is covered with a ſlanting thatched roof, ſupported by bamboo rafters, reſting upon the poſts, and reaching to the top of the wall, which in this part is alſo about twenty feet, though only eight or ten feet on the other ſides of the court. The areas of theſe courts are of the common ſoil of the country; but under the ſheds, the ground is elevated a few inches, by a bed of clayey mortar, which forms the floor; and the wall is in.

in ſome parts white-waſhed with a ſpecies of pipe-clay, which the country produces. In the middle of the palace there ſtands a large building, of two ſtories, and about thirty or forty feet high; ſo that the top of it may be ſeen from without. This houſe ſeems to be intended more for ſhow than uſe; for the King never dwells in it. The whole has ſomewhat the reſemblance of an aſſemblage of farm-yards, with long, thatched barns, hovels for cattle and carts, and low mud walls, to ſeparate them from each other. The interior of the palace is not ſo eaſily to be deſcribed. Its receſſes are ſcarce ever entered by any human being of the male gender; and the female apartments are guarded from intruſion, with more than eaſtern jealouſy.

The author* had once an occaſion to paſs the limits of the courts already deſcribed, when King *Ahadee* was ſick, and would ſee him in his bedchamber. This was a detached circular room, of about eighteen feet diameter. It had a thatched conical roof; the walls were of clay, and white-waſhed within. There was a ſmall area before it, formed of a wall about three feet high, the top of which was ſtuck full of *human jaw-bones*; and the path leading to the door was paved with *human ſkulls*. The mattreſs and bed-ſted were of European manufacture, the curtains of check. The furniture of the room conſiſted of a ſmall table, a cheſt, and two or three chairs; and the clay floor was covered with a carpet, which the author had ſold to him ſome months before. The apartments for the women, each of whom has a ſeparate hut, occupy, it is ſuppoſed, the remainder of

* A. Dalzel.

of the ſpace within the palace-walls; except a ſmall part, appropriated to the eunuchs, and to ſome neceſſary ſtorehouſes, for holding the proviſions for the King's numerous family, his *cowries*, iron bars, clothes, arms, ammunition, and ſome articles of European furniture.

The late King was very deſirous of buying any thing of this ſort that he could procure; ſuch as tables, chairs, bureaus, mahogany liquor-caſes, walking-canes, caſes of knives and forks, ſpoons, ſilver cups, and glaſs ware. The author once carried him a two handled ſilver cup and cover, of chaſed-work, weighing *two hundred and twenty-ſix ounces*.

The vulgar among the Dahomans affect to believe that their King does not eat. Indeed he does not eat in public, though he makes no ſcruple to drink. He entertains the Whites who viſit him, with great hoſpitality. They often dine in his preſence; ſometimes in the piazzas, or ſheds, before mentioned, and ſometimes in the open area of one of the courts. On ſuch occaſions, the table and the gueſts are ſcreened from the ſun by large umbrellas, held up by attendants clothed in the country dreſs. The King has cooks who have been inſtructed in Europe, or at leaſt at the different forts; ſo that he is able to treat his viſitors with victuals dreſſed in the manner of their reſpective countries. There is no want of table apparatus: the table-cloth is commonly a piece of new linen, cut off for the purpoſe; the diſhes are of pewter or earthern-ware; and the knives and forks ſilver-handled. The white men, on ſuch occaſions, are

ſeated

ſeated on chairs; the *Caboceers*, and heir apparent, are placed on the ground near the Europeans, who hand them ſome of the victuals: which they eat, as if by ſtealth, without knife or fork.

The dreſs of the men, in *Dahomy*, conſiſts of a pair of ſtriped or white cotton drawers, of the manufactory of the country, over which they wear a large ſquare cloth of the ſame, or of European manufacture. This cloth is about the ſize of a common counterpane, for the middling claſs; but much larger for the Grandees. It is wrapped about the loins, and tied on the left ſide by two of the corners, the others hanging down, and ſometimes trailing on the ground. A piece of ſilk or velvet, of ſixteen or eighteen yards, makes a cloth for a *Caboceer*. * The head is uſually covered with a beaver or felt hat, according to the quality of the wearer. The King, as well as ſome of his miniſters, often wears a gold or ſilver laced hat, and feather. The arms and upper part of the body remain naked, except when the party travels or performs ſome piece of work, when the large cloth is laid aſide, and the body is covered with a ſort of frock or tunic, without ſleeves. The feet are always bare, none but the Sovereign being permitted to wear ſandals. In the hand is uſually carried either a cutlaſs or wooden club. For an officer of ſtate, the club is of ivory, which is a very expenſive ornament, on account of the great waſte in making it; a whole elephant's tooth, and that not a ſmall

* One conſiſting of 25 Engliſh ells, of crimſon velvet, was ſent out lately, as a preſent to one of the Kings on the coaſt.

ſmall one, being deſtroyed in the fabrication of this badge of dignity. Inferior *Caboceers* carry a ſort of blunt ſabre, with a broad blade and a wooden handle, ſerving rather for ornament than as an offenſive weapon.

Warriors wear what is commonly called a graſs cloth, made in the country, of the ſkin of palm-tree leaves, parted into ſmall threads, knotted and wove. This is afterwards tinged with various dirty dies, and wrapped round the loins. They alſo wear a cartouch-box of their own manufacture, a powder-flaſk of callabaſh, with many groteſque ornaments and fetiſhes, which, together with the uncouth devices painted on their faces and bodies, give them a very fiend-like appearance. Every *Dahoman* man alſo carries a *tobacco-pouch*, containing tabacco, a flint, ſteel, and tinder; together with one or two tobacco-pipes, in a neat wooden caſe.

The dreſs of the women, though ſimple, conſiſts of a greater number of articles than that of the men. They uſe ſeveral cloths and handkerchiefs, ſome to wrap round the loins, and others to cover occaſionally the breaſts and upper part of the body. The neck, arms, and ancles, are adorned with beads and cowries; and rings of ſilver, or baſer metal, encircle the fingers. The ears are pierced ſo as to admit the little-finger, and a coral bead of that ſize ſtuck into each, if the party be able to afford it; otherwiſe a portion of red ſealing-wax, or a piece of oyſter-ſhell poliſhed, is applied in the ſame manner. Girls, before the age of puberty, wear nothing but a ſtring of beads

or ſhells round the loins; and young women uſually expoſe the breaſts to view.

The *Dahomans* are leſs addicted to the practice of cutting or *tatowing* the body, than their neighbours; contenting themſelves with a perpendicular inciſion, which leaves a mark between the eye-brows. The Whydahs, of both ſexes, cut their foreheads and cheeks in ſuch manner as to give them the appearance of being very much pitted with the ſmall-pox. The women alſo mark the lower part of the body with various devices.

The inhabitants of the neighbouring ſtates are likewiſe known by the ſcarifications on their bodies; every country making uſe of this cuſtom in their own manner. The *Ardrahs* make an inciſion in each cheek, turning up a part of the fleſh towards the ears, and healing it in that poſition. The *Mahees* are diſtinguiſhed by three long oblique cuts on one cheek, and a croſs on the other. Some bore the ears, others the noſe, thruſting a bead or a cowrie into the aperture.

Circumciſion is univerſally practiſed among the *Dahoman* ſubjects, but not at ſuch an early age as among the Jews; the time of ſubmitting to this operation being left to the boys themſelves, whoſe careſſes are not admitted of by the females till they have undergone this amputation. A certain operation, peculiar to this country, is likewiſe performed upon the women.*

The

* Prolongatio, videlicet, artificialis labiorum pudendi, capellæ mamillis ſimillima.

The *Dahoman* woman do not admit the embraces of their huſbands during pregnancy, nor at the time of ſuckling, which continues two or three years, nor while under the *catamenia*; during which they retire to a part of the town allotted for their reception. The proſtitutes, who in this country are licenſed by royal authority, are alſo obliged to confine themſelves to a particular diſtrict, and are ſubject to an annual tax.

The general character of the Dahomans is marked by a mixture of ferocity and politeneſs. The former appears in the treatment of their enemies, and in the celebration of thoſe *Cuſtoms* which have been ſanctioned by the immemorial practice of paſt ages, under the idea of performing a grateful oblation to the deceaſed; the latter they poſſeſs far above all the African nations with whom we have hitherto had any intercourſe: this being the country where ſtrangers are leaſt expoſed to inſults, and where it is eaſy to reſide in ſecurity and tranquillity.

Of their bravery we ſhall have occaſion to produce many conſpicuous examples; and of their hoſpitality and generoſity, every ſtranger who has reſorted to the Dahoman coaſt can teſtify.

The nature of their government makes them very reſerved with regard to every ſtate tranſaction; but on occaſions where this reſtraint is unneceſſary, they are abundantly affable and communicative.

Having already mentioned the *annual cuſtoms*, and as we ſhall have occaſion frequently to take notice of them in the courſe of

this Hiſtory, we ſhall premiſe a ſhort account of this ſingular feſtival.

At the approach of the *Cuſtoms*, which are uſually celebrated ſoon after Chriſtmas, the King leaves *Calmina*, where he generally reſides during the reſt of the year, and repairs to *Abomey*, his ancient capital, and the burial-place of the Royal Family. About this time, he diſpatches his meſſengers extraordinary, called *half-heads*,* with his gold-headed cane and compliments to the European Governors at *Grigwee*, inviting them to witneſs the ſolemnization of this feſtival.

Each of the Governors carries an annual preſent to the King, conſiſting of a piece of rich ſilk for a dreſs, together with ſome brandy and other articles, amounting in the whole to about 50l. ſterling. Theſe are received, not as the conſideration by which they hold their reſpective forts, but as a token of friendſhip and good correſpondence; for the King takes care to make them ſenſible, that he does not accept ſuch preſents for the ſake of their value, as he always returns more than is equivalent: ſuch as a young female ſlave, which he preſents to each under the denomination of a waſherwoman; and one fine cotton cloth, at leaſt, for a counterpane. Beſides this, he entertains them during their ſtay at Dahomy with the greateſt liberality and kindneſs; giving them from time to time, ſheep,

* So called from having the half of their heads ſhaved. They have each ſeveral ſtrings of human teeth, ſlung like a ſoldier's belt, which give them an odd appearance.

ſheep, poultry, and other articles, and allowing an abundance of *pitto* * and meal for their attendants.

The *Yavougah*, or Viceroy of *Whydah*, is charged to furniſh the white men with a ſufficient number of porters and hammock men, together with an armed guard; which laſt is ſeldom accepted of, not from motives of economy, theſe men getting no pay from the Europeans, except about the value of twopence halfpenny each in cowries, for their daily ſubſiſtence; but becauſe the journey is always made in perfect ſafety, and travellers accommodated with Eaſtern hoſpitality. For there are a kind of caravanſeras, in the towns through which they paſs, allotted for their reception; on their arrival at any of which, they are received by the *Caboceer* of the place, who preſents them with ſuch refreſhments and neceſſaries as the country affords, and kindly preſſes them to make known their wants, which he readily ſupplies.

On their arrival at *Abomey* they are received with a ſalute of cannon, and lodged, during their ſtay, in apartments belonging to the maſter of the ceremonies. They are liberally ſupplied, as I have already obſerved, with mutton, poultry, and other articles for their own tables, and thoſe of their attendants; which are ſent from time to time by the King or his *caboceers*.

The celebration of the *Cuſtoms* uſually continues about a month, during which there is ſome public exhibition every fourth

* A kind of ſmall beer, made of maize or millet, which is not an unpleaſant drink.

fourth, or market, day; the intermediate days being employed in preparations. The whole would afford a very amuſing ſpectacle, if it were not for the human ſacrifices which are annually made for the purpoſe of *watering*, according to the country expreſſion, the graves of the deceaſed royal family.

One of the market-days is ſet apart for ſinging and dancing. There are profeſſed ſingers who perform, by the hour, before the King. The ſongs are moſtly extemporary, in praiſe of the Monarch and his exploits; and the performers are rewarded upon the ſpot, according to the merit of their compoſitions.

Beſides theſe extempore ſongs, their bards, on ſolemn occaſions, rehearſe over the whole hiſtory of their country, ſitting at the King's gate. This recital takes up ſeveral days; and they are attended by young men of the beſt memories, who endeavour to qualify themſelves to become their ſucceſſors, when there ſhall be a neceſſity for their ſervices.

Another day is allotted for feaſting in the market-place, where a large camp is made for the purpoſe, and many tents pitched for the accommodation of the King, *Caboceers*, white viſitors, and ambaſſadors from foreign ſtates. Here a very large quantity of victuals, previouſly dreſſed, and carried in proceſſion by the King's women in their beſt clothes, is diſtributed, not only among the more diſtinguiſhed gueſts, but even without the camp, where the vulgar partake plentifully. *Pitto*, brewed by the ladies of the palace, is likewiſe dealt out with a liberal hand upon the ſame occaſion; nor is there any want of brandy

and

and other liquors from Europe. In ſhort, the whole reſembles what is ſometimes ſeen at a general election, with this difference, that it is more orderly.

Various other ſcenes are exhibited during this carnival, ſome of which being deſcribed in the following pages, we ſhall not anticipate; but cloſe this account with the detail of an extraordinary ſpectacle which commonly concludes the ceremony.

Contiguous to the palace, a large ſtage, of about 100 feet by 40, is erected;* this is ſupported by a vaſt number of piles, 10 feet long, driven into the ground, upon which are laid joiſts, and then branches and ſtraw. The wall of the palace forms the boundary behind; the front and ſides are railed. The floor, as well as the railing, is covered with carpets and country cloths; and the front and ſides are adorned with a multitude of flags, ſtreamers, and large umbrellas of various colours, ſome of which are made of gold and ſilver tiſſue. At a little diſtance, a fence of thorns keeps off the rabble. On this ſtage are piled a great quantity of cowries, ſtrung in branches of two thouſand each, pieces of brocade, and other ſilks, ſtrings of coral, European and country cloths, Brazil tobacco, pipes, bottled liquors, and a variety of other articles. At an appointed time, the King, with all his *Caboceers* and vaſſals, repairs to the ſtage, where the Europeans alſo are preſent. Here each officer is allowed to chooſe a cloth for himſelf, the Prime Miniſter making the firſt election, and the reſt following his example, according to their rank. Sometimes, alſo, a ſtring of coral is given to each. After this, the King takes up a bunch of cowries, and throws it over

* Vide Plate V.

over the fence among the multitude. All the *Caboceers*, and the Europeans if they pleaſe, follow his example, and toſs over all the goods, except a few bunches of cowries, which are reſerved for ſome of the favoured ſervants, who are permitted to take their ſtand between the ſtage and the fence, and which are handed to them by their maſters. The rabble come prepared for this ſport; being all ſtark naked, except that a ſtrong bag, girt round the loins, hangs before, for the reception of the cowries. Some aſſociate themſelves in parties, in order to be able to carry off a piece of ſilk or cloth. Such prize becomes frequently the object of competition between two parties, and a violent ſtruggle enſues; but as no kind of weapon is allowed to be carried by the people aſſembled on this occaſion, no fatal accident follows. The effuſion of blood, however, commonly making part of a *Dahoman* exhibition, this alſo is cloſed with the death of at leaſt one human victim, who, together with ſeveral other animals, is thrown, bound, from the ſtage, to be murdered below.

The ſpecimens of art produced by the *Dahomans* diſcover a degree of perfection little to be expected from the rude ſimplicity of their tools. Their looms are the moſt awkward machines imaginable, yet they manufacture very pretty and durable cloths of cotton, which are held in great eſtimation among themſelves, and are often purchaſed by the Europeans for counterpanes, at a high price. Their dies ſtand waſhing very well, eſpecially their blues, which are inferior to none. They likewiſe weave cloths of the palm-tree leaves, which they ſometimes die, but oftener wear in the natural colour, which is hori-

ſomewhat higher than that of nankeen. They likewiſe make neat mats of the ſame ſubſtance.

The implements of the forge are very ſimple. The bellows conſiſts of two bags of rough goats ſkin, with a ſtick of about three feet in length, fixed perpendicularly to each, and alſo a horizontal tube (an old gun-barrel) to convey the air from the bag, through a little clay party-wall, to the fire. While the ſmith is at work, a boy holds a ſtick in each hand, blowing the fire with alternate puffs, ſo that the air is expelled and drawn in by turns through the two pipes, there being no other communication with the bags. In this way they contrive to make a welding heat, and fabricate not only the neceſſary implements of huſbandry, but carpenter's tools, cutlaſſes, ſpears, and other weapons. The anvil is of ſtone, or an old iron cannon; and the hammer is a thick piece of rounded iron, of about a foot in length, which they hold by one end. Beſides blackſmiths, there are a ſort of braziers or ſilverſmiths, who make manillas or bracelets, handles to cutlaſſes, rings for the fingers, and other trinkets of braſs or ſilver, which they melt in crucibles* of their own making.

The cookery of the *Dahomans* ought not to eſcape our notice. Their diſhes are few, but excellent: of thoſe, black-ſoup is the chief. It is made either of fleſh or fiſh, with a variety of mucilaginous vegetables, well ſeaſoned with pepper and ſalt, and

* They make likewiſe earthen pots for boiling proviſions, water-jars, and other utenſils, of the ſame materials.

enriched with palm-oil. † This diſh is likewiſe ſeaſoned with an ingredient which is made of the ſeeds of a tree called, in the country, wild tamarind, ſomewhat reſembling thoſe of the cucumber. Theſe are prepared by fermentation, and formed into a maſs of as high a reliſh as aſſafœtida, but of which a ſmall quantity diſſolved in the ſoup, gives it an exquiſite flavour. Their bread is of maize or millet, ſometimes boiled into a ſtiff pudding, and ſometimes baked, either with or without leaven: they make alſo a very light white and delicate fermented bread of calavanſes, firſt ſtripped of the huſks, and a kind of paſte or flummery of fermented Indian corn, not unlike blanc-mange, though not ſo adheſive.

So much was thought neceſſary, to give the reader ſome idea of this ſingular people, previous to the entering upon the reigns of their Kings; where many other particulars, no leſs curious, will be found, and from which we ſhall detain our readers no longer.

† The butter of the country; as different from that in an apothecary's ſhop as new butter from that which by age has become rancid and of different colours.

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HISTORY OF *DAHOMY.*

PART THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

THE Dahomans were formerly called Foys, and inhabited a ſmall territory, on the north-eaſt part of their preſent kingdom, whoſe capital, *Dawhee*, lay between the towns of Calmina and Abomey, at about 90 miles from the ſea-coaſt.

Early in the laſt century, Tacoodonou, chief of the Foys, having, at the time of his feſtivals, murdered a neighbouring prince, who was with him on a friendly viſit, ſeized on his chief town, Calmina, and ſoon after made himſelf maſter of his kingdom.

Thus ſtrengthened, he dared to wage war againſt a more powerful ſtate, to the northward of Foy, and laid ſiege to Abomey, its capital; but meeting here with more reſiſtance than he expected, he made a vow, if he ſhould prove ſucceſsful,

 that

that he would ſacrifice Da, its prince, to the Fetiſche, or deity, whoſe ſuccour he then implored.

At length, having reduced the town, and captured the unfortunate prince, he built a large palace at Abomey, in memory of his victory. And now it was that he fulfilled his vow, by ripping open the belly of his royal captive: after which he diſplayed the body on the foundation of the palace he was building; and carrying on the wall over it, he named the ſtructure, when finiſhed, Da-homy, or the houſe in Da's belly *.

The conqueſt of Abomey happened about the year 1625; after which, Tacoodonou fixed his reſidence in that town, aſſuming the title of King of Dahomy. His ſubjects changed the name of Foys for that of Dahomans; and at the preſent hour, their former appellation, except amongſt a few of the inland people, ſeems quite forgot.

Nothing further is related of Tacoodonou; nor, indeed, of his two immediate ſucceſſors, Adahoonzou, and Weebaigah, except that the former aſcended the throne about the year 1650, and the latter thirty years after.

It is not till the reign of Guadja Trudo, who ſucceeded Weebaigah in 1708, that any thing is preciſely known about this extraordinary people. All before this time ſtands on the ground of tradition, which is ever more or leſs precarious, in proportion to the number of relators, and the frequency of the narration. Among the Dahomans, for reaſons aſſigned in the

* The belly, in the Dahoman tongue, is *Homy*.

the Introduction, ſubjects of this nature are little known, and leſs diſcuſſed.

But when the active ſpirit of Trudo began to threaten the maritime ſtates, his neighbours, it quickly attracted the attention of the Europeans, whom commerce had brought and ſettled amongſt them. It was then that, by the aſſiſtance of writing, each tranſient fact was fixed, and ſcattered information collected into a body; it was then that tradition gave place to record, and legend to hiſtory.

Before we enter upon the memoirs of this enterpriſing and warlike Prince, it will not be improper to take a ſlight political view of the ſtates around him, as they ſtood about the beginning of his reign, the better to form a judgment of the ſeveral tranſactions that are to paſs in review before us.

In doing this, let us begin on the coaſt, with Coto or Quitta, to the weſt; which is a ſmall kingdom, whoſe prince, about Boſman's time, reſided at the village of Quitta, called alſo Coto and Verbun, and was at continual war with its neighbours, the Popoes, with various ſucceſs.

Little Popo joins Quitta to the eaſtward. This is a ſmall but very warlike kingdom, the remains of the Acras, who were driven out of their own territories on the Gold Coaſt, by the Aquamboes, in 1680. They were in alliance, at times, with Ardra, and fought her battles againſt Offra, and even Whydah itſelf. They were at continual war with the Quittas, which was fomented by the King of Aquamboe, for the purpoſe of directing the attention of both from his gold mines;

and he managed this contention ſo cunningly, that he ſuffered neither nation to prevail too much over the other. Indeed, during the diſſenſions at Aquamboe, in 1700, Popo prevailed, and drove the Quittas out of their country; but they were, ſomehow, reinſtated not long after.

Both theſe countries are flat, the ſoil poor and ſandy, with few trees, except palms and wild cocoas. They have, indeed, ſome cattle and fiſh, but moſt at Quitta;* ſo that this and Great Popo were then frequently obliged to the Whydahs for ſubſiſtence; from whom, though their enemies, they always found means to ſmuggle as much as they were in need of.

Great Popo joins to Little Popo. The country is more fertile; and the city, which is very large, is ſituated in a marſhy lake at the mouth of the river Toree. This city is, from its ſituation, very ſtrong; as a proof of which, when beſieged by the Ardras, aſſiſted by the French ſhipping, it was able to repulſe them both with great loſs. In 1682, this people was at war with both Quitta and Whydah; but, from prudential motives, they made a temporary peace with the latter, and obtained its aſſiſtance againſt the former. Some writers conſider Quitta, Popo, and Whydah, as diſmemberments of Ardra, with which kingdom, however, they are not more often at war, than they are with one another.

Whydah

* At preſent, proviſion is more plentiful; they bring a number of fine cattle from the inland parts of Quitta.

Whydah and Ardra were the two greateſt maritime ſtates in the neighbourhood of Dahomy*; rivals in trade, and conſequently ever jealous of each other. The people of Whydah, at that time, are deſcribed as the moſt polite and civilized of any on the whole coaſt†; thoſe of Ardra being much more inſolent and mercenary.

The country of Whydah is the very reverſe of thoſe already mentioned, being, for beauty and fertility, almoſt beyond deſcription; and, before the invaſion of the Dahomans, was ſo populous, that one village contained as many inhabitants as a whole kingdom on the Gold Coaſt‡. It was reputed, that the Whydahs were able to bring into the field, two hundred thouſand effective men.

The country of Ardra is no leſs beautiful than that of its neighbour; but this abounds with hill and dale, whereas the former is one uniform ſurface, one great park. Nor was this kingdom leſs formidable than Whydah, before the incurſions of the Eyeos in the year 1698. Even at the time in queſtion her power was very conſiderable; for we find, when invaded by Dahomy, her army conſiſted of more than fifty thouſand men. Yet

* The trade here was very conſiderable, this being the principal part of all the Guinea Coaſt for ſlaves. In its flouriſhing ſtate, there was above 20,000 negroes yearly exported, from this and the neighbouring places, to the ſeveral European plantations. Vide *Snelgrave*'s Account of Guinea, p. 2.

† Snelgrave complains of the thievery of the common people, which it was hardly poſſible to guard againſt, ſo bold and dexterous were they at it; though they knew that, if taken in the fact, they became the ſlaves of thoſe they had plundered. *Snelg.* p. 3.

‡ *Boſman*'s Deſcription of the Coaſt of Guinea, p. 315.

Yet both these nations are branded by Bosman with pusillanimity, who tells us, they employed mercenary soldiers, such as the Aquamboes, or other Gold Coast negroes, to fight their battles*: which we shall find to be true.

The capital of Whydah was then Xavier or Sabee, seven or eight miles‡ from the beach; that of Ardra was a town of the same name, about twenty miles from the sea. This must be distinguished from another Ardra, or Alladah, which is also a great town on the road from Whydah to Calmina. As both these countries are particularly described in other parts of this work, it will be unnecessary to enlarge on the subject here. And with respect to the several small and independent states, interspersed amongst those we have already mentioned, such as Toree, Weemey, Offra, or Little Ardra, &c. it will be sufficient, in this place, to refer our readers to the map, for their respective situations; reserving their political connexions till they become of sufficient consequence to be taken notice of in our history.

Of the inland kingdoms, that to the west of Dahomy is called Mahee; that to the north-east, Eyeo. Snelgrave calls the former of these Yahoo; but as there was little of either of these known before the reign of Trudo, their description properly belongs to the History. The Tappahs, to the north-east of Eyeo, were unknown in his time; and indeed till very lately, when they made themselves as formidable to the Eyeos, as these to all the southern nations.

Such

* *Bosman*, 315.

‡ About seven miles.—*Snelg.* 2. The English fort was then about a league from the shore, and Sabee about five miles to the north of it. *Smith*'s New Voyage to Guinea, pages 166, 169.

Such were the ſtates around Dahomy, and ſuch their jarring and divided intereſts, about the time of the acceſſion of Trudo; where a new ſcene opens, that diſplays to wiſer nations, how ſoon a ſmall ſtate may become too formidable, and how neceſſary to their own preſervation are thoſe alliances, that maintain in equilibrio the balance of power.

CHAP. II.

Trudo *begins to reign—His early conqueſts—Embaſſy to the maritime ſtates—Attacks and conquers* Ardra.

GUADJA Trudo, ſometimes called Trudo Audati, aſcended the throne of Dahomy in the year 1708, being then about nineteen years of age. The hiſtory of the early part of his life has not reached us; but if we conſider his inland conqueſts, previous to the turning his arms againſt the nations along the coaſt, we muſt confeſs he had already merited the name of a great commander. Many of theſe are mentioned by the natives, and amongſt others Didouma and Povey, lying to the north-weſt of Dahomy; the latter of which muſt have been very conſiderable, ſince he aſſigned it as a patrimony to the heir-apparent.*

A very little experience muſt have taught ſuch a mind as that of Trudo, how much more effective in war were the European weapons,

* The King's eldeſt ſon is the heir apparent; though, for reaſons of ſtate, the Miniſters, after the King's death, may alter the order of ſucceſſion.

weapons, than thoſe uſed by the inland people of Africa; and this muſt have ſuggeſted to him the advantage of a ſea-coaſt, where only thoſe weapons were to be obtained. For, as to the ſupply, that might be procured through the hands of the maritime nations, it was at beſt precarious. Their jealouſy might wiſh to keep from others the means of becoming as formidable as they ſuppoſed themſelves to be; and ſo they might either refuſe to furniſh him at all, or they might ſet ſo high a price upon them, as would amount to a prohibition. This made him determine to poſſeſs himſelf of a part of the coaſt; but, previous to this undertaking, the event of which was uncertain, he endeavoured to obtain his principal end by negociation. He ſent ambaſſadors to Ardra and Whydah, to whoſe very borders he had already extended his conqueſts, requeſting an open traffic to the ſea-ſide, offering at the ſame time to pay the cuſtomary duties. This, as he probably expected, was peremptorily refuſed; which furniſhed him with a pretence for obtaining his deſire by force, when he ſhould find a proper opportunity. Nor was it long before ſuch an opportunity offered, as ſerved not only to conceal his real motive, but even to make it appear highly laudable and diſintereſted.

The European traffic had long increaſed the riches and arrogance of the maritime ſtates, ſo that both whites and blacks alike experienced the inſolence and oppreſſion of their Kings and Caboceers. In Ardra, particularly, the duties had been conſiderably raiſed, and ſeveral impoſitions practiſed: the King had ſeized on a white factor, ſent to him from the Engliſh governor at Whydah, and had now detained him as a ſlave, two years, under pretence of a debt due to him by the

the African Company; but at length his ill-treatment of his own brother excited a reſentment which quickly put an end to his oppreſſion.

This injured Prince, whoſe name was Huſſar, applied to Trudo, pointing out the many wrongs he had ſuffered from the King of Ardra, his brother, and offering him a large ſum of money to revenge them. This propoſal was too agreeable to be rejected. Trudo was then ſettling his new conqueſts; but laying aſide all other thoughts, he immediately raiſed a conſiderable army, which he ſent off, under his general, to Ardra, with no leſs ſecrecy than expedition.

The King of Ardra, however, by ſome means obtained intelligence of his deſign; and without delay diſpatched ambaſſadors to Whydah, repreſenting this intended invaſion as the common cauſe, and intreating immediate aſſiſtance. Whydah, abandoned to faction, and devoid of council, could only conſider Ardra as a powerful rival, that often interrupted her trade, and whoſe deſtruction was rather to be wiſhed for than prevented. She therefore refuſed the ambaſſador's requeſt; and, by conniving at her neighbour's deſtruction, added force to the victor's arm, which ſoon after was directed againſt herſelf.

Ardra, diſappointed, but not diſmayed, prepared to meet the enemy with a determined reſolution. Her army conſiſted of about fifty thouſand men. The conflict was as obſtinate as it was ſharp and terrible. They oppoſed the Dahomans three days; and it was not till their king was killed, or taken

priſoner *, that victory declared againſt them. They then gave way. In the rout the conquerors made a moſt terrible carnage, and took upwards of eight thouſand priſoners; whilſt thoſe who could eſcape, fled, with the utmoſt precipitation, to the woods and other places where they could find ſhelter.

Amongſt the priſoners was the white man, formerly mentioned, whoſe name was Bulfinch Lambe. He was treated very kindly by the Dahomans; but detained priſoner, and ſent up to Abomey, where Trudo, though he would not part with him for a long time, gave him a houſe and ſervants to attend him, with every other accommodation in his power. From Lambe we have accounts of the riches and proweſs of this great prince; that he abounded in plate, wrought gold, and other ſumptuous articles; that he had five and twenty pieces of cannon, ſome of which weighed upwards of a thouſand weight †, which he took great delight in firing twice round every market-day; that he was very liberal, but withal vain and proud, and conſidered the having white men about him as a great addition to his grandeur; on which account he had formerly bought of the Popoes an old Mulatto Portugueſe, at the rate of near five hundred pounds, who together with Lambe were always ſeated beſide him, when he made his public appearance. It was from this Portugueſe, probably, that Capt. Snelgrave obtained the account

* Smith ſays, he was killed before his palace-gate; Snelgrave that he was taken priſoner, and beheaded. *Smith*'s *Voyage*, p. 170; *Snelgrave*, p. 7.

† It does not appear whence theſe cannon were brought, nor how they were obtained. They were, probably, the ſpoils of the forts at Ardra. If ſo, it ſhows the vigour of the Dahomans, in having already tranſported ſo many heavy weights to ſuch a diſtance, Lambe's letter being dated Nov. 27, 1724. Vide *Smith*'s *Voyage*, p. 171.

account of the Eyeo invaſion, mentioned in the next Chapter*; for, at the time the Captain was at Trudo's camp, at Ardra, which was in 1727, Lambe had been gone about a year. The King had ſent him to England with rich preſents, in order to bring white men to ſettle in Dahomy; but he never returned.

The land of Jaquin, which formed part of the ſea-coaſt of Ardra, had an hereditary governor, tributary to the King of Ardra, to whom he annually paid a certain number of loaves of ſalt, of which great quantities are made here. On the conqueſt of Ardra, the lord of Jaquin ſent his ſubmiſſion to Trudo, offering him the ſame tribute he had uſually paid to the conquered king. This the King of Dahomy readily accepted, thinking, as he was now in poſſeſſion of a free paſſage to the ſea-coaſt, the Jaquins might be uſeful, from their knowledge of trade, in furniſhing him with a conſtant ſupply of arms and gunpowder to carry on his intended conqueſts. Beſides, as theſe people were enemies to the Whydahs, whom they conſidered as rivals in their trade, he thought they would be no leſs uſeful in his deſigns upon that kingdom.†

And here again the policy of Trudo is diſplayed; who, though in other inſtances he had endeavoured to ſecure his conqueſts by a terrible deſtruction of the nations he had ſubdued, knew his intereſts too well, to treat the people of this country in like manner; at leaſt till he ſhould have no further need of them.

* Snelgrave ſays, the Portugueſe Mulatto, who informed him of this tranſaction, was taken in the Ardra war; but it is moſt probable that Lambe's account is right. V. *Smith*, p. 176, 177.

† *Snelgrave*, p. 20.

CHAP. III.

Account of the Eyeos—*The tenure under which their King holds his government*—*Their former invaſion of* Ardra—*Invade* Dahomy—*Are defeated by ſtratagem*—*Terrible to the* Dahomans—Trudo's *intention, if they ſhould return.*

THE kingdom of Eyeo* lies many days journey to the north-eaſt of Abomey, beyond a great and famous lake, the fountain of ſeveral large rivers that empty themſelves into the Bay of Guinea.† The people are numerous and warlike, and, what is here ſingular, their armies totally conſiſt of cavalry; and as every ſavage nation has ſome cruel method of rendering themſelves dreadful to their enemies, this people were ſaid to have a cuſtom of cutting of the privities of thoſe they have ſlain in battle; and that no one dared, on pain of death, to take an enemy priſoner, that was not furniſhed with a hundred of theſe trophies.‡

The Eyeos are governed by a king, no leſs abſolute than the King of Dahomy, yet ſubject to a regulation of ſtate, at once humiliating and extraordinary. When the people have conceived an opinion of his ill government, which is ſometimes inſidiouſly infuſed into them, by the artifice of his diſcontented miniſters, they ſend a deputation to him, with a preſent of parrots

* Called Oyeo, Okyou.—*Barbot*, &c. Probably this may be the kingdom of Gago, which lies to the northward of Dahomy, eight or ten days journey. The Mooriſh aſpirated ſound of G being nearly like a hard H, as in the word *George*, ſpelt Jorje by the Spaniards, and pronounced Horké, or Horché; whence Gago may have been founded Haho, Haiho, or Haiko.

† *Snelgrave*, p. 55.

‡ *Boſman*, p. 374.

parrots eggs, as a mark of its authenticity, to repreſent to him that the burden of government muſt have ſo far fatigued him, that they conſider it full time for him to repoſe from his cares, and indulge himſelf with a little ſleep. He thanks his ſubjects for their attention to his eaſe; retires to his apartment, as if to ſleep; and there gives directions to his women to ſtrangle him. This is immediately executed; and his ſon quietly aſcends the throne, upon the uſual terms, of holding the reins of government no longer than whilſt he merits the approbation of the people.*

This ſeems to have been the firſt inland nation in this part of Africa, of which the Europeans had any intimation. Boſman ſpeaks of an invaſion of Ardra, in 1698, by a potent inland people, which could, from his deſcription, be no other than the Eyeos. From him we learn, that ſome of the Ardras, who had been ill treated by their king, or his caboceers, flying to this inland prince for redreſs, he ſent an ambaſſador to remonſtrate with the King of Ardra on the ſubject, and to inform him, if his viceroys and other deputies did not govern the people more juſtly and tenderly, he ſhould be obliged, however unwilling, to interfere. Ardra treated the monition with contempt, and put the ambaſſador to death; but the King of Eyeo took a dreadful revenge: his troops poured like a torrent† into Ardra; deſtroyed almoſt half the kingdom; and, what marks at once his ſeverity and his juſtice, notwithſtanding his general had obtained ſo ſignal a victory, he cauſed him to be hanged, on his return, becauſe he had

* Mr. *Norris*.

† The Whydahs, ſay the Eyeos, invaded Ardra with ten hundred thouſand horſe; from which, without taking it literally, we may ſuppoſe the number muſt have been immenſe. We ſhall ſee, further on, the idea of the Dahomans about the number of an Eyeo army.

had not brought with him the King of Ardra, who was the author of all this evil.

It was this nation that, ſhortly after the conqueſt of Ardra, made war on Trudo, at the inſtigation of ſeveral fugitive princes, whoſe fathers had been conquered and ſlain by the Dahomans. They entered Dahomy with an immenſe body of horſe, amounting to many thouſands. Trudo immediately left Ardra; and, though he had none but infantry*, yet, theſe having fire-arms, as well as ſwords, he had ſome hopes that he might at leaſt make a ſtand againſt them. He knew, however, that they were well mounted, and armed with bows, javelins, and cutting ſwords; that they were, beſides, courageous, and had ſpread terror through the adjacent countries; he alſo knew, that he had to conteſt in an open country, where horſe would have every advantage; yet all this could not damp his daring ſpirit. He marched boldly to face the enemy; and, on meeting them, ſupported ſuch a fire from his muſquetry as effectually affrighted the horſes, ſo that their riders could never make a regular charge on the Dahomans. Notwithſtanding this, their numbers were ſo great, and the diſpute ſo obſtinate, that, after fighting for four days, the troops of Dahomy were greatly fatigued, and all was in danger of being loſt: at this critical moment a ſtratagem entered the mind of the king, worthy of the moſt enlightened general, and which has been ſeveral times practiſed, with equal ſucceſs, in times both ancient and modern.

Trudo had in his camp great quantities of brandy, at that time one of the principal articles of the French trade to Guinea. This,

* There are few or no horſes in Dahomy. Such as they have are very ſmall; which indeed was the caſe with the inland countries, in Leo's time (about 1492), when good horſes, from the north of Africa, were bought up at Gago, at a high price; perhaps with intention to improve the breed, and eſtabliſh a numerous cavalry.

This, with many valuable goods, he contrived to leave in a town, adjacent to his camp, and under favour of the night withdrew to a convenient diſtance. In the morning the Eyeos, ſeeing the enemy fled, ſecure of victory, began to burn and plunder the town, and to indulge themſelves very freely with the treacherous liquor: this ſoon intoxicated, and ſpread the ground with the major part of their army. At this juncture, the Dahomans, who had timely intimation of the enemy's diſorder, fell upon them with redoubled fury, deſtroyed a great number, completely routed the reſt; and thoſe that eſcaped, owed their ſafety to their horſes.*

In this manner did Trudo happily clear his country of a very formidable enemy; but however he might conſider himſelf victorious in the preſent inſtance, he knew there was every thing to be feared from the inroads of ſuch a numerous nation, and that too a nation of horſemen. He, therefore, with a foreſight that did him much honour, ſent ambaſſadors with many preſents to the King of Eyeo, to avert his further anger; but, without depending too much on their ſucceſs, he laid his plans, in caſe of another invaſion. He knew that the Fetiſche of the Eyeos was the ſea; and that themſelves, and their king, were threatened with death, by the prieſts, if they ever dared to look on it: he therefore reſolved, in caſe he ſhould be defeated by them in a future battle, to repair with his people to the ſea-coaſt for ſecurity, and leave the upland towns and country to their diſpoſal; in which he knew they could not remain after they had deſtroyed the forage; and that all the damage they might otherwiſe do, to thatched houſes and mud walls, would eaſily be repaired.

CHAP.

* The Dahomans pretend, that in their flight, the terror and precipitation of the Eyeos was ſo violent, that great numbers tumbled into, and filled up part of the deep moat which ſurrounds Abomey, the reſt making themſelves a bridge of their bodies, to effect their eſcape. *Capt. Fayrer.*

CHAP. IV.

Trudo's Deſign againſt Whydah—*Its Government at that time*—*Attacks and takes the northern part*—*ſurpriſes the reſt*—*Anthropophagi.*

EVERY thing ſeems to have remained in quiet during the ſtay of Mr. Lambe in Dahomy, which he quitted about April, 1726*: for though the King's mind was intent on the chaſtiſement and conqueſt of Whydah, he had been hitherto prevented from carrying his deſign into execution, partly by the perſuaſions of Lambe, partly by the difficulty of the enterpriſe. On the one hand, Lambe preſented the number of Whydahs that were uſed to fire-arms, and the great aſſiſtance they would derive from the forts, as well as from the ſkill of the white people ſettled among them; on the other, the King was ſenſible that the enemy, being ſurrounded with rivers and ſwamps, would, if too hard preſſed, eaſily take to the iſlands and faſtneſſes, whither the troops of Dahomy, for want of canoes, and ſkill to manage them, could not follow: in which caſe not only his conqueſt would be incomplete, but he would be ſubject to perpetual haraſſment from ſuch troubleſome neighbours.

At this time Whydah was governed by a weak and indolent prince, who, having aſcended the throne at the age of 14, ſoon became

* Snelgrave was at Ardra in April, 1727; when the King told him, Lambe had been gone twelve moons. *Snel.* Voyage, p. 67.

became the tool of a train of designing ministers. They flattered his natural dispositon for dissipation and effeminacy, as the surest means of sharing his power; and now, at the age of thirty, he was neither qualified for the council, nor the field. His indolence and indulgence had swoln him to an enormous size; and, constantly shut up in his seraglio, amongst thousands of women, over whom he asserted the most despotic sway, he vainly imagined his bulk to be the type of his real greatness. Mean while the ministers and caboceers around him, intent on their own private interests, divided the state into a thousand different factions, which, added to the natural timidity of the people, the result of plenty, long ease, and inaction, exposed it as a ready prey to any invader.

When threatened with the Dahoman invasion, this vain creature made so light of both the people and their king, that, though it is the constant custom of these nations to destroy princes and great men taken in war, lest their power and knowledge should excite the conquered nation to rebellion; yet, in bravado, he told Snelgrave, he would not even cut off the King of Dahomy's head, when taken; but would keep him alive as a slave in one of the most contemptible situations about his person.* This foolish speech, which, no doubt, reached the ears of Trudo, probably helped to exasperate him. Accordingly, when he had made the necessary preparations, he first attacked the northern part of the kingdom, which was under the hereditary government of a great lord, then called Appragah, who forthwith sent to the King of Whydah for assistance; but, through the interest of his enemies at court, was, most strangely, refused. Whereupon, after a slight resistance, Appragah submitted to

* *Snelgrave*, p. 6.

and was kindly received by the King of Dahomy, who afterwards reinſtated him in his poſſeſſions.

The conqueror immediately prepared to penetrate into the heart of the country. For which purpoſe he encamped on the banks of a river that runs about half a mile to the northward of Sabee or Xavier, the capital of Whydah.* Here he expected a vigorous oppoſition: for, having neither boats nor boatmen, his army could only paſs the river by fording; and even this was not practicable, except at one place, which 500 reſolute men could eaſily have defended againſt the efforts of his whole army. But he was deceived; for inſtead of uſing the neceſſary precaution to prevent the incurſions of ſo dreadful an enemy, the Whydahs left the paſs to the care of the Snake, their Fetiſche or God: to whom they ſacrificed night and morning, praying him to prevent the enemy from croſſing the river. And ſatisfied with this, they even omitted, which is ſcarcely credible, to keep ſo much as a guard there.

Trudo, probably ſuppoſing his whole force might be neceſſary for this enterpriſe, had left the conduct of this part of his army to his general, and was gone to bring down the other part, which was encamped at his head-quarters at Ardra; having firſt ſent an intimation to the European factors, as he had formerly done to thoſe at Ardra, that he expected them to remain neuter, under pain of his reſentment. The general, obſerving the enemies neglect, ordered 200 men to try the ford; which having done unmoleſted, they, being reſolute fellows, immediately proceeded on to the town, without waiting for further orders, ſhouting and ſounding their war muſic all the way. This happening about

* *Snelgrave*, p. 10.

about three o'clock in the afternoon, the out-guards of the town were almoſt all faſt aſleep; but being awakened by the noiſe, they fled into the town, crying out, that all the Dahoman army had paſſed the river. This no ſooner was announced, than king and people began to decamp; and in a very ſhort time the fields were covered with men, women, and children, flying from all parts towards the ſea-ſide. The King, and many of his train, by the help of canoes, got ſafe to the iſlands near Popo; but numbers, who could not obtain that conveyance, were, in their hurry, drowned, in attempting to ſwim over to them. Thoſe ſlain and made priſoners were innumerable; and thouſands, who ſheltered themſelves up and down the country among the buſhes, afterwards periſhed by ſword and famine.

The Dahoman general could not believe the reports that were brought him of his good fortune; nor ſcarce truſt to the evidence of his own ſenſes, when, after having conducted over the remainder of his army, which he did the ſame evening, he ſaw the truth confirmed, "that two hundred ſoldiers had put "to flight a nation, capable of oppoſing them with a thouſand "men to one:" ſo wretched a creature is man, when enervated by luxury, indolence, and ſervile paſſions!

There is no other way of accounting for this imbecility of mind, this panic fear with which the whole of ſo great a nation muſt have been ſtruck, on ſuch a trifling alarm. Though they pretended afterwards, when ſome of thoſe who had eſcaped, were upbraided with the cowardly manner in which they had deſerted their country, that it was "for fear of being "eaten; that the Dahomans were cannibals, whom no-

" thing could reſiſt; and that the thought of being devoured by " their own ſpecies, was far more terrible to them than their " apprehenſions about being killed." *

Snelgrave ſtrongly inclines to believe that the Dahomans were indeed *anthropophagi*; † and this idea is as ſtrongly combated by Atkins. ‡ The former ſupports his opinion not only on the reports of credible witneſſes, but from a very natural induction, " That thoſe who could ſo cruelly ſacrifice their " fellow-creatures as the Dahomans do, might probably carry " their barbarity a degree farther." The other founds his objections merely on the opinion, that ſuch practice is unnatural; but late voyages have ſhewn the eating of the fleſh of enemies to be very common. Beſides, Atkins himſelf allows, that amongſt ſavages " ſingle inſtances may have been, as their " way to expreſs an intenſe malice againſt a particular enemy, " and *in terrorem*, &c." which is enough for Snelgrave's purpoſe, as he only lays a ſtreſs on enemies eaten ſolemnly at their ſacrifices, which has an equal juſtification. Though it is to be noted, that he mentions the ſale of human fleſh in the market, on the evidence of a Mr. More, ſurgeon of a ſhip in that trade: which Atkins, not knowing how to get rid of it, would turn into a miſerable pun, viz. that it meant the ſale of living fleſh, or ſlaves.

But whether this idea were true or falſe, it could plead nothing in excuſe for the flight of ſeveral thouſand men from ſo ſmall

* *Snel.* p. 42. † *Id.* p. 51. et ſeq. ‡ *Atkins*'s Voy. to Guinea, p. 122, et ſeq.

Numberleſs inſtances are found, in voyages, of this ſeemingly unnatural cuſtom; though even the probability of it has been conteſted by Dampier and others, as well as Atkins. Vide Dampier, Voyage round the World, 4th. edit. p. 484, 5. But this is opinion againſt teſtimony.

ſmall a number; and there is nothing but our ſympathy for the imbecility of human nature, and our pity for the miſery in which it involved this people, that can make us look with patience on the cowardice which occaſioned it.

CHAP. V.

Trudo's *joy for his victory.—Sacrifices a great number of captives.—Reflections on this barbarity—and on the means of preventing it.—The* Dahomans *have no genius for trade.—Wars not begun for the purpoſe of taking ſlaves.*

THE Dahoman Prince received the news of this victory with every poſſible demonſtration of joy. He not only gave largeſſes to his officers and caboceers; but, according to the ſavage cuſtom of the country, he floated the altars of his Gods, and the tombs of his deceaſed anceſtors, with the blood of his unfortunate captives.

This ſcene, which was tranſacted at Ardra, was followed, or rather accompanied, by one yet more dreadful, at the camp. The general, probably by his maſter's command, gave orders that the remaining priſoners, who through age, wounds, or infirmities, had not been able to march with their fellows to head-quarters, ſhould be put to death on the ſpot. And to heighten this bloody act with accumulated horrors, he com-

mitted the execution of them to the boys of his army, whom he thereby meant early to enure to deeds of cruelty, and furniſhing them with ſwords, ordered them to cut off the priſoners heads. As ſome of theſe boys were only ſeven or eight years of age, and hardly able to manage ſuch a weapon, the tortures theſe unhappy wretches muſt have ſuffered, from the weakneſs and incompetency of their executioners, are eaſier to be conceived than deſcribed. *

The inhuman treatment of enemies taken in war, has ſtained the annals of all nations. There ſeems to have been amongſt mankind an emulation to excel in this ſpecies of cruelty. Nor has this vice been confined to ſavage nations; Greece and Rome have afforded examples more than ſufficient to juſtify theſe practices in Africa and America, † if cuſtom could give ſanction

* Smith, p. 192, ſays, the general ordered all thoſe to be murdered that were unmerchantable; but this is every way wrong: for there was no market for them at that time; and we ſhall find that thoſe would ſerve for victims, in ſolemn ſacrifices, that were by no means fit for labour. See Chapter vii.

This manner of torturing victims is not peculiar to Dahomy. It ſeems to be a hard feature in the complexion of ſavage nations, to train up their children to blood. Boſman ſaw eleven ancient perſons tortured to death at the funeral of a king on the Gold Coaſt; one of whom, after having endured the moſt exquiſite torments, was committed to a child of ſix years of age to be beheaded; which he was near an hour in performing, not having ſtrength enough to wield a ſabre. V. Boſman, p. 223. Some of the Americans uſed to commit their priſoners of war to boys to be ſlain: five or ſix of whom beat out their brains with clubs. V. Purchas's Pilgrims, 1033.

† Witneſs the ſacrifice of 300 Lacedemonians and their king, by Ariſtomenes, the Meſſenian. V. *Euſeb.* Evang. Prep. l. 4. c. 7. edit. 1534, and of as many

ſanction to error, or ſuch nations were deſirous of precedents for their juſtification.

Priſoners of war, by the right of conqueſt, are undoubtedly the property of the victor. He conſiders them as ſuch, and will always diſpoſe of them as beſt ſuits with his own intereſts, and thoſe of his country. When viewed in the light of men who have diſturbed the nation's peace, invaded its rights, murdered its protectors, levelled at the lives of the conquerors; and whoſe boſoms are ſtill actuated by the ſame ſpirit, though now overawed by power; here ſelf-preſervation pleads againſt mercy. Man, uninfluenced by paſſion, may feel, even in a ſavage ſtate, for the ſufferings of his fellow-creature, and ſhudder at the idea of depriving him of life; but under continual apprehenſion for his own ſafety, he will not heſitate to remove the object of his fear, in whatever manner may appear the moſt effectual. Hence the exerciſe of the power which conqueſt has given, when ſelf-preſervation is the motive, cannot be called cruelty: which name only belongs to a wanton abuſe of that power, in adding torture to death; or by having recourſe to death, or any rigid expedient, when gentle ones may be employed with equal ſecurity. *

The

many of the principal citizens of Peruſia, by Auguſtus, to the manes of his uncle Julius. V. *Suetonius* in vita Auguſt. Xenophon ſays, the Lacedemonians put to death more Athenians in eight months peace, than their enemies had ſlain in thirty years war. V. *Xenop.* de Reb. geſt. Græc. lib. 2. p. 278. and many others.

* Vide Puffendorff's Duty of Man, b. 2. c. 4; and Law of Nations, folio, p. 450; Grotius de Jure, &c. lib. 11, c. 5.

The two moſt general ways of diſpoſing of ſuch captives, have been by death or tranſportation. Ranſom, exchange, or liberty on parole, are the effects of a ſyſtem that involves a greater variety of conſiderations, and a higher degree of civilization, than can be expected in ſuch nations as Dahomy. People like them would laugh at the idea of giving their foes the opportunity of aſſaulting them a ſecond time; and for ranſom, the warrior nations ſeem to deſpiſe it. Therefore, after they have preſerved, as their own ſlaves, ſo many of their priſoners as they want for ſtate or drudgery, they either ſell the remainder to thoſe who will remove them away into a diſtant country; or, when there is no ſuch demand for them, they put them to death.

In this light, Aſiatic pomp, and European neceſſity for labourers enured to a tropical ſun, appear to have been the only effectual inſtruments of mercy, the only means whereby the lives of many of thoſe unfortunate people have been ſaved. And their effect would have been much greater, had not the horrid fiend, Superſtition, who at times has tyrannized over the whole human race, ſo frequently barred up the avenues to pity: by ſuggeſting that the Author of good is pleaſed with murder, and that the ſouls of victims may be enſlaved as well as their bodies. It is not here a place to enter into the ſubject of human blood offered to the Gods, or to the *manes* of the dead;* it is enough to ſhew, through our hiſtory, that Avarice can ſheath the knife even of Superſtition, and that her incitements

* Vide Potter's Antiq. c. 4, on Sacrifices; Bryant and others, on the ſame ſubject; Prevoſt's Hiſtoire des Voyages, Index word *Sacrifices*; Purchas's Pilgrims, many places, &c. &c.

ments to ſlaughter, powerful as they may be, are confined within narrow limits, when ſelf-intereſt attends upon lenity.

Where there has been no traffic of this ſort, nature ſhudders at the devaſtations that have been made by revenge, and all the baſer paſſions, under the colour of piety. Murder, in all its forms, has raged with unlimited fury. During the reigns of the Whydah Kings, their priſoners were ſold, and human ſacrifices were ſeldom and inconſiderable: * in Dahomy, where war took the lead of commerce, they were frequent, and often times numerous; but in America, where traffic of this kind was not known, they exceeded all belief. Wars were inſtituted for the very purpoſe of obtaining victims; and at the dedication of one temple at Mexico, which laſted four days, they ſacrificed ſixty-four thouſand and eighty captives, in a manner too horrid to be expreſſed. †

The murder of ſo great a number of Whydahs on the preſent occaſion, at Dahomy, ſeems principally to have ariſen from there being no ſhips in the road. The factories had been plundered in the onſet, and afterwards burnt; ‡ the factors taken priſoners, and though releaſed, were ſtill in fright and confuſion. The multitude of priſoners was daily increaſing; it became expenſive, and perhaps alarming. As there was no vent for them, policy dictated to Trudo, that he might get rid of his fears and incumbrance, and at the ſame time increaſe his glory, if he ſhould make ſo noble and valuable a preſent to his gods and forefathers; that, from ſuch an act, his magnificence would be conſidered as exceeding all bounds,

* Vide *Boſman* under Whydah.

† Vide *Prevoſt*, Hiſtoire des Voyages. Vol. xiii. p. 528.

‡ Vide *Smith*, p. 191.

and his piety be extolled to the ſkies. Under theſe conſidera-tions, he devoted to death four thouſand, * which probably was the whole number as yet taken, and thereby gained an applauſe he could have well ſpared, had the more profitable alternative preſented itſelf.

It is true, the cuſtom of his country required an acknowledgement, and that a liberal one, to the Gods, for his victories; † but the quantum depended on the victor's pleaſure: and we find Trudo knew how to keep his piety, at leaſt, within due bounds. For in a tranſaction that followed ſhortly after, having taken eighteen hundred priſoners of another nation that had offended him more than the Whydahs, he contented his prieſts with four ‡ hundred of them: ſhips being then in the road, where he could turn the remainder to profit.

That Trudo had ideas of the advantages of trade to himſelf and his people, appears in many inſtances. He had commenced theſe wars with both the maritime nations, from their having refuſed him a part in their commerce. § He had an eager deſire for European arms, and for ſuch of their commodities as he thought were ſuitable to his dignity. He had told Lambe, ſome years before, that he could wiſh to have ſhips come to ſome place to trade for his ſlaves only, and to bring him what was fit for ſuch a king as he. ‖ Yet, with all thoſe prepoſ-ſeſſions, all theſe deſires, Trudo and his Dahomans were equally ignorant of the principles on which trade muſt be conducted. The haughty ferocity of a people, bred ſolely to war and rapine, is

* Vide *Snelgrave*, p. 31. † Id. p. 46. ‡ Id. p. 37, 49. § Id. p. 5, 6, &c.
‖ Vide *Smith*, p. 147.

is incompatible with the mild and ſteady ſpirit of commerce. Hence, by their harſhneſs and violence on the one hand, and their fraudulence and ignorance on the other, they, in time, ſo far loſt their connexions, that, from two thouſand ſlaves a-year, tranſported from Whydah only, in 1726, * the greateſt number now ſent off from this and the two great kingdoms of Ardra and Dahomy, together with ſeveral other ſmall ones united to them, is only five thouſand five hundred; little more than one-fourth part of the former. See the Report of the Lords, relating to the ſlave-trade, printed in 1789.

This circumſtance muſt appear the more aſtoniſhing to thoſe who have been led to think that, in Africa, wars originated in the deſire of obtaining ſlaves for the Europeans; eſpecially when they ſhall find this kingdom, with very little intermiſſion, to have been engaged in wars, with all its ſurrounding neighbours, for near ſeventy years.

CHAP. VI.

White men made priſoners.—Ships arrive.—Snelgrave's *journey to* Ardra.—*King's camp and court.—Army returns from* Tuffoe.—*Victims choſen for ſacrifice.*

AMONGST the priſoners were the white men belonging to the different factories, to the number of forty, or more. They were ordered up to Ardra, and proper hammocks provided for them,

* *Snelgrave*, p. 2.

them, that they might travel with convenience. They were ſome days at Ardra before they obtained an audience; but then, the King received them politely, ſet them at liberty, and made ſome of them preſents; with the promiſe, that he would cauſe trade to flouriſh, and have a particular regard to their intereſts, ſo ſoon as he had ſettled his conqueſts.

About three weeks after, ſeveral ſhips of different nations arrived in the road.* The firſt of which ſeems to have been the *Katharine Galley*, commanded by Captain W. Snelgrave: to whoſe attentive and judicious obſervations, this life of Trudo is much indebted.† He laments the horrid devaſtation of ſo fine and populous a country, the carnage of the inhabitants, and their remains lying every where around him. Particularly, as he had been ſeveral voyages there, and had been witneſs of its beauty and population in its moſt flouriſhing ſtate: in the deſcription of which, all other writers on the ſubject agree with him. Smith, ‡ who was at Whydah about the ſame time, ſays,

* The latter end of March, 1726-7, I arrived with the Katherine Galley, in the road of Whydah, *Snel.* 19,—ſailed thence, and anchored in the road of Jaquin, 3d of April, Id. 21. On Friday the 7th of April, 1727, we arrived in Whydah road, and found lying here three French and two Portugueſe ſhips. *Smith*, Voyage, p. 166.

† Publiſhed in 1734, under the title of "A full Account of ſome Parts of Guinea, and of the Slave-Trade," 8vo. He ſpeaks of the conqueſt of Whydah, as having happened about three weeks before his arrival. V. *Snel.* p. 19.

‡ Smith was ſent out as ſurveyor, in 1726. His New Voyage to Guinea is a poſthumous work, publiſhed in 1744, 8vo. of which ſee pages 166 and 199. See alſo our Introduction, which contains the ſubſtance of the deſcription of the ſeveral writers.

ſays, " The natives were ſo induſtrious, that no place which " was thought fertile, could eſcape being planted, though even " within the hedges that incloſe their villages and dwelling " places; and they were ſo very anxious in this particular, that, " the next day after they had reaped, they always ſowed again, " without allowing the land any time to reſt;" which is no ſmall proof of its ſtrength and fertility.

Smith, however, complains of its being very unwholeſome, which, he ſays, he was afterwards informed became more and more ſo by the negligence of the Dahomans, * who have ſuffered it to remain uncultivated, and to be overrun with poiſonous and ſtinking weeds. Snelgrave found trade ſo dead, that after ſtaying three days at Whydah, and having heard the melancholy accounts of Mr. Tinker, the late, and Mr. Duport, the then, governors, as well as thoſe of other gentlemen of the factory, he ſailed for Jaquin, about ſeven leagues to the eaſtward, to ſee if matters wore a better face there.

It was here that, ſhortly after his arrival, he received a meſſenger from the King of Dahomy, inviting him to Ardra; of which, after ſome heſitation, he accepted; and by that means became a ſpectator of many things worthy relation. In this journey, which is of about forty miles, he was accompanied by a Dutch captain, whoſe ſhip had juſt before been deſtroyed by the Portugueſe; a Dutch writer, belonging to their factory, carrying large preſents to the King; and the Lord of Jaquin's brother, with the tribute of that State, and great preſents beſide. The prepa-

* This information ſeems to have been given him, about a year or two after the conqueſt.

preparations for their journey took them up three days. They had an hundred black ſervants in their retinue; each gentleman had ſix hammock men, by two of whom he was carried, the reſt relieving the others in their turns; alſo a ſmall horſe to ride on, when weary with lying. They ſet out on the 8th of April, about nine o'clock, and reached Ardra the next day, about the ſame time. The roads, he ſays, were good; the country beautiful, but deſolate; the towns and villages deſtroyed; and the fields ſtrewed with human bones.

When they arrived within half a mile of the King's camp, they halted. Soon after, a meſſenger came from his majeſty, to compliment and welcome them; intimating that a great man would preſently arrive to receive them. They accordingly took out their beſt apparel, and dreſſed themſelves under the covert of an old wall; after which, advancing towards the camp, they were met by the great captain,* as the blacks called him, who was a principal officer of the court, attended by 500 ſoldiers, with fire-arms, drawn ſwords, ſhields and banners. On their approach they uſed many ſtrange ceremonies, that excited the fear of the travellers, as well as their wonder. The great captain, and ſome of his officers, approached them, flouriſhing their naked ſwords over their heads, and pointing them at their breaſts; ſkipping and jumping round them, with many antic poſtures. After which, the great man aſſumed a ſedate air; and, giving them his hand, welcomed them in the King's name,

* The principal officer of the court is called the *Tamegan*, as we ſhall ſee further on; but it is the ſecond officer, or *Mahu*, that is maſter of the ceremonies. Snelgrave ſeems not to have known theſe titles, nor even the name of the King; for which laſt we are indebted to Mr. Lambe. Vide Smith's Voyage, 171.

and name, and drank their healths in palm wine: they, in return, drank the king's health, in wine and beer, with both which he ſeemed very well pleaſed. Theſe ceremonies being over, they all ſet out, under this guard, for the camp, accompanied with a diſmal noiſe, which they called by the name of muſic.

They arrived at the camp in about half an hour. It was ſituated near a great ruined town, late the principal place of the kingdom of Ardra.* Here the army lay in tents, which, according to the negro cuſtom, were made of ſmall boughs, covered with thatch, reſembling bee-hives; but big enough for ten or twelve ſoldiers, who crept in at a hole in one ſide. On entring the camp, chairs, taken from the Whydahs, were ſet for them under ſome ſhady trees, where great numbers flocked round to ſee them; but were kept off by the ſoldiery. Having reſted here about two hours, and beheld divers feats of activity performed by the ſoldiers to divert them, they were conducted to a thatched tent, prepared for their reception; where, having crept in, and ſtowed their baggage, the great man left them, to inform the King of their arrival: appointing them a guard, to prevent their being diſturbed or moleſted.

It being now noon, they ſat down to dinner on the ham and fowls they had brought with them; but were ſo annoyed by flies, they could ſcarce put a morſel into their mouths, without taking

* Barbot calls this town Great Ardra; and Lambe, who lived there two years, Ardra; which is the name it is now, I believe, known by. The natives call it Azem, or Aſſem; and report, that it was nine engliſh miles in circumference; containing a variety of ſhady walks and gardens, as well as a great number of ſpacious buildings, &c. V. Barbot, 346; Churchill's Voyage, Vol. 5; Prevoſt Hiſt. des Voy. Vol. iii. p. 519.

taking in ſome of theſe vermin with it. They little thought whence this nuiſance proceeded, elſe they would have made a much ſhorter dinner; nor was it till about three o'clock, when, being deſired by a meſſenger from the great captain, to come to the king's gate, that, on their way, they perceived, with no ſmall degree of diſguſt and horror, two heaps of dead men's heads, piled up on two large ſtages, and covered with ſwarms of their late viſitors, the flies. The interpreter told them, "they "were the heads of four thouſand of the Whydahs, who had "been ſacrificed by the Dahomans to their God, about three "weeks before, as an acknowledgement of the great conqueſt "they had obtained."

They found the king's gate to be only an entrance into a large court yard, paliſadoed round, and containing ſeveral mud-walled houſes. Stools were ſet for them; and an officer preſented them with cows, ſheep, goats, and other proviſions, with this compliment, that, as the King was in camp, it was not in his power to provide for them better. They received this favour with due acknowledgement, and were returning out at the gate, when they were ſurpriſed with the ſight of forty ſtout fellows, ranged on both ſides the gate, with fuſils on their ſhoulders, and broadſwords in their hands; having round their necks ſtrings of dead men's teeth, reaching as low as their middle, both behind and before, in great quantities. Theſe, they were told, were the King's heroes, or worthies; who, having killed many enemies in battle, were allowed to wear their teeth in this manner, as trophies of their valour: on pain of death, however, if they dared to ſtring one, whoſe owner had not been killed by their own hands.

Next morning, at nine, they obtained an audience. They were received at the king's gate, and introduced into a large court, paliſadoed round. Here the King was ſitting in a fine gilt chair, taken from the King of Whydah. Three large umbrellas were held over his head, by women, to ſhade him from the ſun; and four other women ſtood behind his chair, with fuſils on their ſhoulders. All the women were finely dreſſed, from the middle downwards; the upper part of the body of either ſex, remaining, in this country, generally uncovered: their arms were adorned with many large manellos, or bracelets of gold, of great value; and round their necks, and in their hair, were abundance of beads, of divers colours, brought from a far inland country, where they are dug out of the earth; and which are in as great eſteem with the negroes, as diamonds among the Europeans.*

The King was dreſſed in a gown, flowered with gold, that reached to his ankles; an European embroidered hat; and ſandals on his feet. His manner of ſitting at that time, viz. on a chair, was not his cuſtom, nor that of the country; but ſeemingly intended for more than uſual ſtate: for, on a future audience, he was croſs-legged on a carpet, after the Aſiatic manner, though he always preſerved a proper majeſty and decorum.

The viſitors were placed at about ten yards from the chair of ſtate, and ordered to ſtand ſtill. The King then commanded the interpreter to bid them welcome; they bowed low, as directed;

* Theſe probably were only the glaſs beads of Europe, brought there by the Muleys, or Malays, and pretended to be of great value.—J. F.

and Snelgrave, through the ſame means, paid his compliments to his majeſty; with which he was much pleaſed. He ordered chairs for them, made them ſit down, and drank to their healths. Then liquor being brought them, they returned his ſalutation; after which, the King invited them to ſtay, and ſee the cuſtoms of his country.

It is neceſſary to remark, previous to the detail of what paſſed, that, at the time when Trudo was employed in the conqueſt of Whydah, he had ſent twelve of his wives from Ardra up to Dahomy, with a number of ſlaves, carrying a large quantity of goods and fine things, under an eſcort of five hundred ſoldiers. On their way, they were attacked by the *Tuffoes*, whoſe country is about ſix days journey from Ardra;* who routed the guard, murdered the women, and ſeized on the treaſure. To revenge this outrage, the King had no ſooner completed the conqueſt of Whydah, than he ſent out part of his army; who returned the ſame evening we entered the camp, with eighteen hundred of the Tuffoes priſoners.

Theſe priſoners were now, by the King's order, brought into the court; out of which he ſelected a great number for ſacrifice; reſerving the reſt as ſlaves, for his own uſe, or for ſale to the Europeans. Proper officers were in readineſs, to receive the captives from the ſoldiers, who had taken them in battle, and to

* Snelgrave, p. 36.—Tuffoe, Tafoe, or Tafu, is an inland country of the Gold Coaſt, nearly ſouth-weſt of Abomey; it abounds in gold, and lies about 10 or 12 leagues to the northward of Rio Grande; and at about 60 leagues, or 6 days journey, from Ardra. Vide Prevoſt's Map; Hiſtoire des Voy. Vol. 4. *in initio*; and page 214 of the ſame volume.

to pay them, in cowries, the value of twenty ſhillings ſterling, for each man, and ten for a woman or child. Thoſe were next rewarded, who brought the heads of enemies ſlain; ſome having three or four in a ſtring, for each of which they received the value of five ſhillings; and ſervants were appointed to carry them to the heaps: the interpreter informing the viſitors, that the King propoſed, with theſe, and the others, to build a monument.

All this while the great men, both of the court and army, were proſtrate on the ground: none approaching nearer than twenty feet to the King's chair. If they wiſhed to ſpeak to him, they firſt kiſſed the ground; then whiſpered their pleaſure into the ear of an old woman, who communicated it to the King, and brought his anſwer. He was very liberal to them, on this occaſion; preſenting them, in all, with more than two hundred ſlaves. At each preſent, an officer proclaimed the nature of it, aloud; which was immediately re-echoed by the populace, that were waiting without, in great numbers, for the ſacrifices.

Theſe ceremonies were ſucceeded by ſports. Two fellows brought in a great tub, containing, at leaſt, ſix gallons, of ſomething like frumenty, which, after falling on their knees, they threw ſo faſt into their mouths, that it was diſpatched in a few minutes. This, the interpreter informed Snelgrave, was their daily practice, to divert the King; but that they generally died in a few years, and then others took up the trade. Several other ridiculous things were performed; tired of which, and of the heat of the ſun, in which they had now remained

three hours, defended only by umbrellas, they begged leave to retire to their tent, which being granted, they paid their compliments, and went away.

CHAP. VII.

Four hundred Tuffoes *ſacrificed.—The manner deſcribed.—Compared with the* Mexican *ſacrifices.*—Dahoman*'s reaſons for this practice.—Idea of the Deity.*

SNELGRAVE purſues his account, to this effect. Juſt as we had dined, the Lord of Jaquin's brother arrived, in ſuch a fright, as had changed his colour from black to tawny, and deprived him, for ſome time, of the power of ſpeech. It was occaſioned by his having juſt met the unfortunate victims, whom the King had choſen out, that morning, on their way to the place of execution. Their fate, their cries, and lamentations, the dreadful idea of their being devoured by their murderers, filled his mind with horrors; and raiſed in it ſuch apprehenſions, for his own ſafety, as all our arguments could not remove. The King had not yet admitted him to audience; he conſtrued this as an evil omen; he therefore begged the protection of our tent, which he conſidered as more likely to afford him ſecurity than his own; and we granted this requeſt, without heſitation.

Of

Of this ceremony, curioſity, getting the better of our feelings, impelled the Dutch captain, and myſelf, to become ſpectators; and having, by our interpreter, obtained of the prieſts the neceſſary permiſſion, we went with him to the place where the ſacrifices were to be performed, which was about a quarter of a mile from the camp. Great numbers of people were aſſembled on the occaſion; and our guards, making way for us, through the crowd, brought us near to four ſmall ſtages, erected about five feet from the ground; at the ſide of one of which we took our ſtand, in a ſituation, whence we could plainly ſee all that paſſed.

The firſt victim was a comely old man, between fifty and ſixty years of age. His hands were tied behind him. In his behaviour, he ſhewed a brave and undaunted mind, without any ſemblance of fear. He was brought to the ſide of one of the ſtages, and ſtanding upright, a Fetiſher, or prieſt, laid his hand on his head, repeating ſome words of conſecration, which laſted about two minutes: after which, he made the ſign to a man, that ſtood behind the priſoner, with a broad ſword; who immediately, at one blow, ſevered his head from his body.

The rabble, on this, gave a great ſhout. The attendants threw up the head on the ſtage; and the body, after having lain a little while on the ground, that the blood might drain from it, was carried away by ſlaves, and thrown on a ſpot adjoining to the camp. It was here the linguiſt told them, how the different parts of the victim were appropriated. The blood, it ſeems, they devoted to the Fetiſche, or God; the

head

head belonged to the king;* and the body was for the common people: by which Snelgrave underſtood, that it was given them for the purpoſe of eating; and in which idea he ſeems confirmed by the ſequel.

As all this may appear to be the effect of ſavage nature, in its loweſt, or moſt uncultivated ſtate; we have only to turn our eyes towards the other ſide of the Atlantic, and behold what was tranſacted in the moſt poliſhed of any nation that the Europeans have diſcovered. At Mexico, after having collected ſuch a number of captives, as they conſidered worthy the acceptance of their deity, and which often amounted to many thouſands, they diſpoſed them in long files, unbound; at the head of each of which, a prieſt placed himſelf, after having ſhewn to every one of them an idol, which he held in his hand, as their god. They then proceeded to different lofty altars; amongſt which, that in the great temple was near 80 feet high, and 40 feet ſquare, at top. Theſe they aſcended by ſtrait, and almoſt perpendicular flights of ſtairs. When at the top, four prieſts, ſeizing one of the victims by the hands and feet, whilſt a fifth put the inſtrument of ſtrangulation, a wooden collar, in the form of a ſnake, round his neck, to prevent his cries, they lifted

* The heads of victims, or thoſe killed in battle, were preſerved for different purpoſes, in many countries. Trudo ſeems to have made ſome diſtinction; the heads taken in the war with Ardra, he ſtuck round the walls of his two palaces, at Abomey, to the number of about thirty thouſand. With thoſe of the ſacrificed Dahomans, and Tuffoes, he intended to build a monument of either his piety or victory. In the Mexican cemetery, the Spaniards counted above 136 thouſand, ſtuck in the walls; beſides thoſe formed into Columns, and other devices. V. *Lambe*'s Letter, in *Smith*'s Voyage, p. 171. *Snelgrave*, p. 38. *Purchas*'s Pilgrims, p. 991.

lifted him up, and threw him forcibly acroſs the ridge of a triangular ſtone; when, probably, his back was broken. His breaſt, by this violence, was thruſt into a proper poſition to meet the knife of the principal ſacrificer, or chief prieſt; which he immediately cut open, and, with his right hand haſtily tore out the victim's heart, holding it firſt up to the ſun; then rubbing it, all bloody, over the face of the idol, that he had brought with him. At this ſignal, the four prieſts threw the body down the flight of ſteps; to the bottom of which, it was generally precipitated in a moment. All the captives being treated thus, the bodies were aſſigned, by the prieſts, to thoſe that had taken them in war: who diſtributed them amongſt their friends; and they were eaten ſolemnly. *

Here we find cruelty to have increaſed, with refinement. And it would be happy, if nations that boaſt of a much higher degree of cultivation, could free themſelves from the like cenſure; eſpecially when they have ſuffered blind zeal, and ſuperſtition, to hold the place of reaſon and religion.

The author goes on to inform us, that he ſaw many more of the priſoners ſacrificed, in the ſame lamentable manner: that the men went to the ſide of the ſtages, bold and unconcerned; but that the cries of the poor women and children were very moving. The ſcene ſo far affected his companion, the Dutch captain, that, like the Jaquin juſt mentioned, he expreſſed his perſonal apprehenſions, from a ſuperſtition ſo ſavage and cruel; alledging, that if, in the fit of enthuſiaſm, it ſhould ſuggeſt, that white men were more acceptable offerings to

* V. Herrara, Decade 3, c. 16. Prevoſt Voyages, Tom. xii. p. 546.

to the Fetiſche, than thoſe of their own colour, it might bring both the curious Europeans into the moſt imminent danger: a notion by no means unreaſonable; and which induced them to withdraw, as ſoon as they decently could. Captain Snelgrave, mean while, putting on a good face, entered into converſation with ſome of the caboceers and officers; who, in general, excuſed this cruel exhibition, as the cuſtom of the country: one of the commanders obſerving, that they had conſtantly, after any conqueſt, offered to their god a certain number of captives; that theſe were always choſen out of the priſoners, by the king himſelf; that, were this omitted, no more ſucceſs would attend them; and that their conqueſts, made within a few years, without any defeat, ſhewed ſuch offerings to be both neceſſary and uſeful. His arguments were equally ready, in defence of ſacrificing old or young: the former, he ſaid, were too cunning to ſpare, and too old for market; the latter, being in this inſtance, deſigned to attend, in the other world, on thoſe whom the Tuffoes had ſlain, it was proper they ſhould be young, and fit for ſuch ſervice. Looking on this as a rude notion of a future ſtate, Snelgrave ventured to aſk him, what opinion the Dahomans held, concerning their God. From the anſwer, though naturally imperfect and confuſed, he could collect, that they eſteemed him as a ſort of Guardian Angel, ſubordinate to ſome other God. "Perhaps," ſaid the officer, "that God may be "yours, who has communicated ſo many extraordinary things "to white men, as Mr. Lambe has told me; but as that God "has not been pleaſed to make himſelf known to us, we muſt "be ſatisfied with this we worſhip."

Having ſtood by the ſtages, near two hours; tired with this horrible place, and ſight; and perceiving the mob grow ſomewhat

what thinner, on the ſide where they ſtood, the two travellers took the opportunity of returning to their tent; their guard ſtill clearing the way before them. In the evening they walked out, to viſit the officer juſt mentioned; and, in their way, paſſed by the place where the ſacrificed bodies were thrown. There were two great heaps of them, conſiſting, as they were told, of the remains of four hundred perſons. Next morning theſe were all vaniſhed; having been, in the night, as the interpreter told them, ſolemnly eaten by the Dahomans. This account, whether true or falſe, is one part of the evidence, on which Snelgrave founds his opinion, mentioned in a former chapter; and which, probably, was ſupported by his knowledge of the manner in which the bodies of ſlaves are treated, in ſeveral parts of the coaſt; where, if not eaten, as above, burial is denied them, and they are left to rot above ground, or to be devoured by the vultures, or wild beaſts.*

Snelgrave, though a ſpectator, has given but an imperfect account of this ſacrifice; and, very probably, his mind was as much agitated, by his critical ſituation, as that of the Dutch captain; elſe he might have informed us of what was doing, at the other three ſtages: at each of which, in all probability, the ſame

* "As to the burial of ſlaves, in ſome parts it is not allowed them; but their bodies are caſt out into by-places, there to rot away, or be devoured by wild beaſts: but at thoſe parts of the coaſt, where they are kinder to their ſlaves, in this particular, they throw eighteen or twenty inches depth of earth over them." *Barbot*, p. 283, Churchill's edition.

There is no evidence of extraordinary kindneſs, in the Dahomans, towards their priſoners; on the contrary, we ſhall find, in the courſe of this work, ſeveral inſtances of burials being refuſed to their own people. J. F.

ſame ſcene was tranſacting, as at that where they placed themſelves: for one prieſt could not have performed the neceſſary rites over 400 hundred victims, in an afternoon; unleſs he devoted ſeveral at a time, which, it ſeems, was not the caſe. The people's eſtimation of the number really deſtroyed, could not be very erroneous; which allows us the liberty of conjecture, as to the manner: and we cannot form any one ſo natural, as that ſeveral fetiſchers at once were employed on the ſame buſineſs, in different quarters.*

It is time to turn our eyes from a ſcene of ſo much horror; which we willingly quit, with this obſervation: that he would be eſteemed as both a wiſe and happy man, who could prevent the appearance of ſuch another, on the human ſtage: whether by the aſcendancy of right reaſon, or by wiſely playing off one ardent paſſion againſt another.

It was about this time that Captain Snelgrave became acquainted with the Portugueſe Mulatto formerly mentioned. He had lived with the King, ever ſince the time of the Ardra war; who had given him a houſe, and a handſome maintenance, together with one of thoſe phœnomena, ſometimes met with on the coaſt, a white negro, † if I may uſe the expreſſion, as a

* The ſame reaſoning holds, reſpecting the numerous victims ſacrificed, at one time, in Mexico. *Herrara* ſays, they were not only ſlain on the great altar, but in the cemetery, or place where they reſerved the heads. In all probability, on extraordinary occaſions, temporary altars were erected, round the great one, and in ſeveral parts of the city: elſe, how can we account for near 70,000 perſons being offered up, in the ſpace of four days?—J. F. Vide alſo *Prevoſt*, Vol. xii. p. 540.

† They are ſo called from having the features and wool of the negroes, with a white, or pale colour. The accounts that travellers have given of theſe people

a wife. As he ſpoke the language, and was acquainted with the manners of the people, he was of no ſmall uſe to our traveller, in the regulation of his conduct, as well as in affording him ſeveral valuable anecdotes: it was from him that he obtained an account of the Eyeo war, as related in a former chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

Commercial regulations adjuſted. — *Story of* Bulfinch Lambe, — of Prince Tomo, *and other impoſtors.* — King's *waſhing time.* — Fetiſche-*day.* — *Army exerciſed.* — Muleys. — Snelgrave's *return to* Jaquin.

OUR author now obtained an audience of the King, for the purpoſe of adjuſting the regulations and duties, in their commercial intercourſe; where he had the opportunity of beholding him in another and much more amiable point of view. For, though conſcious of his own incompetency, he had left

 his

people, which ſeem to be only a kind of *luſus Naturæ*, have cauſed ſome of our geographers to aſſert the exiſtence of a nation of the ſame colour, in the inland parts. Atkins ſays, at Seſthos he ſaw a man of this kind, who told him he came from a great diſtance, where there were more; Captain B. Lambe, that he had ſeen ſeveral; Mr. Thompſon, that he had ſeen ſuch at Angola, and at Madagaſcar; and ſeveral have been exhibited in England. But all this gives no warrant for the exiſtence of ſuch a nation.—J.F. et vide *Atkins*'s Voy. p. 67.

his part of this buſineſs to a Caboceer, who had reſided a on time at Whydah, in the capacity of one of his agents, and was well acquainted with the ſubject; yet, when any difference or difficulty aroſe, he interfered, as a moderator, with no leſs intelligence than politeneſs.

When Zunglar, ſo was the agent called, had aſked ſuch duties as occaſioned ſome demur, Trudo no ſooner underſtood the cauſe, than he told Snelgrave, "that though, as a conqueror, "he could eſtabliſh what impoſts he pleaſed, yet, as he was "the firſt Engliſh captain with whom he had treated on af-"fairs of commerce, he would indulge him like a young bride, "who, at firſt, muſt be denied nothing." Accordingly he deſired him to name the duties he thought reaſonable; which having done, the King readily accepted of them, though they amounted to no more than the half of what had been lately paid to the conquered nation.*

After much conference, having adjuſted the buſineſs to mutual ſatisfaction, his Majeſty fell into diſcourſe with our Captain, on ſeveral ſubjects. He complained much, that Lambe, the perſon mentioned before, though he had made him great preſents at parting, and had his ſolemn promiſe that he would return ſhortly, had never kept his word. The author here adds, that Lambe took with him, by the King's order, a black man, called Tom, a native of Jaquin; who alſo was made priſoner, at the taking of Ardra. This fellow, who ſpoke good Engliſh, was deſired to obſerve if what Lambe had ſaid of our King, cuſtoms, and

* The imprſſions, both at Ardra and Whydah, are loudly complained of, by moſt of the writers about this time. V. *Phillips*, 227; *Deſman*, 339; *Barlot*, 128; *Atkins*, 172; and *Snelgrave*, ſeveral places.

and manner of living, were true. But Lambe, glad of getting out of the clutches in which he had been ſo long detained, went directly to Barbadoes, ſold the ſlaves that had been given him, and at length ſold Tom himſelf to a gentleman in Maryland. However, hearing at Antigua, in 1728, what our author had ſaid about him, and that the King had promiſed to give him a ſhip-load of ſlaves, if he returned in any time; he went to Maryland; perſuaded Tom's maſter to give him up; and brought him to England, in 1731.

Coming to our author's houſe, to aſk the particulars of what he had heard at Antigua, and to requeſt his advice on the propriety of returning to Dahomy, he was told it was to be feared that, five years, or more, being now elapſed, it would be too late. The next news he heard of him was, that he had delivered a letter to King George II, as from the King of Dahomy; and had trumped up Tom into the character of his ambaſſador; giving him the ſounding title of Prince *Adomo Oroonoko Tomo*; under which title he was generally received; and ſeveral plays were performed for the expreſs entertainment of his black highneſs: a farce that probably might have continued much longer, but that Captain Snelgrave, with ſome trouble, effaced the impreſſions that had been made on the Engliſh credulity. Lambe's letter was referred to the Lords of Trade, who declared it to be ſuppoſititious; and Prince Tom was ſhortly after ſent back to his own country, where he followed the employment of an interpreter; and where, no doubt, he made an advantageous report of the ſagacity and penetration of our countrymen.

This

This is neither the firſt, nor the laſt impoſition, of the kind, put upon honeſt John Bull. We have had ſuch black princes in abundance. People from any remote part of the world, that wiſh to carry on the buſineſs of impoſture here, never fail of finding knaves or fools to aſſiſt them. Beſides the famous Pſalmanaazar, it is not out of memory, that in London an Indian bazar ſervant * had aſſumed, with ſucceſs, the character of a great man in his own country, and was on the point of being employed very ſeriouſly; but that his maſter, from whom he had been diſmiſſed for his roguery, detected him. At China, ſome time ago, a fellow of that country was about to be bamboo'd, for having the impudence to aſſert, that he had been introduced at our Court: which, to the ſhame of thoſe who introduced him, was however found to be but too true. Nor have our neighbours eſcaped; the French have been full as groſsly impoſed upon, in more inſtances than one; particularly in the beginning of the preſent century, when Lewis Hannibal, no leſs than a King on the Gold Coaſt! † was baptized at Paris, by the famous Biſhop of Meaux, Louis XIV. ſtanding godfather. Cardinal Noailles, ſhortly after, adminiſtered the ſacrament to him; and he was conveyed home by two or three men of war, with ſeveral rich preſents: when behold, on his arrival, he proved to be a Slave of one of the Caboceers of Aſſinee, that the French had ſtolen off the coaſt, and, finding to be a lad of genius, had brought with them to France, where he ſet up the pretence of being the prince or king of Aſſinee.

After a great deal of converſation, which laſted till near nine o'clock, the viſitors were told the King's waſhing time was come;

* A ſervant belonging to a ſhop in the public market.

† *European Mercury*, 1701. This paper called him the King of Syria on the Gold Coaſt, inſtead of Aſſinee. Vide alſo *Boſman*, 394.

come; therefore, having firſt deſired permiſſion to return to Jaquin on the next day, they roſe and thanked his majeſty for all the goodneſs and condeſcenſion he had ſhewn towards them; praying that God would bleſs him with length of days, for the happineſs of his own country, and that of the Europeans, who ſhould come to it. The King returned his thanks for their good wiſhes, promiſing to diſpatch them according to their deſire; on which they paid their reſpects, and parted.

Next morning, expecting an audience of leave, they were diſappointed; for it happened to be the King's Fetiſche-day, on which, it ſeems, he receives no company. But a polite meſſage was brought, informing them they were at liberty to depart when they pleaſed. This congée was accompanied by preſents of ſlaves, cattle, and proviſions to the viſitors; and cloaths and money to their ſervants; which put them all into a very good humour.

In the afternoon the reſt of the army from Tuffoe returned. The author, and his companions, ſaw them perform the ceremony of paſſing the King's gate, and go through their exerciſe. They conſiſted of about 3000 regular troops, armed with muſquets, cutting ſwords, and ſhields. They were divided into companies; each having their proper officers and colours. Their marching was in a much more regular order than our author had ever ſeen before, even amongſt the Gold Coaſt negroes; who were always eſteemed, by the Europeans, as the beſt ſoldiers on the coaſt.

As they paſſed the King's gate, every ſoldier proſtrated himſelf, kiſſed the ground, and ſprung up again with ſurprizing agility;

agility; then they went through their exercise, in the area before the gate, which employed them nearly two hours; and wherein they fired at least 20 rounds of small arms: the whole being so well conducted as to afford much satisfaction to our author and his company, as well as, in all appearance, to the innumerable spectators. Their exercise being ended, the soldiers were ordered to their quarter of the camp.

This army was followed by a rabble of ten thousand, at least; carrying baggage, provisions, dead men's heads, &c. with abundance of boys, bearing the soldiers shields, as was the ancient custom, and which long prevailed in Europe. The linguist told the travellers, that the King allowed each soldier one of these boys, at the public charge; who, thus brought up in the army, in time proved an excellent recruit, when wanted. From this stroke of policy it is easy to judge of Trudo's genius for war, as well as of the means whereby he obtained such great and easy victories.

In the evening, going to take their leave of the great captain, they found in his tent two of the Muley or Malaye people, of which there were about 40, at that time, in the camp. They were black; dressed in long gowns, with a kind of turban on their heads, and sandals on their feet. The interpreter told Captain Snelgrave, that they belonged to a nation far inland, bordering on the Moors; * had been taken in different wars, as

* This is the most accurate account of any given by the preceding writers; some of whom supposed them, from the name, to be natives of Malacca. It seems probable that Guinea is indebted to these wandering Mahometans, for many of its customs; and Europe, for the knowledge of the inland countries. J. F.

as they were trading from one country to another; and were, like the white men, poſſeſſed of the art of writing. The King treated them kindly; in return for which, they dyed goat and ſheep's ſkins of divers colours; out of which, amongſt other uſes, cartouch boxes, and powder bags, were made for the ſoldiers. The author was deſirous of converſing with them, but was informed it would give offence to the great captain. Knowing the jealouſy of all the negroes, in like caſes, he deſiſted; * and having paid his viſit, returned to his tent. Next morning, himſelf, and his companions, who had all completed their buſineſs at Ardra, to their ſatisfaction, ſet off about nine o'clock; and the ſervants, glad of getting from the place where they had beheld ſuch horrors, trotted with them, at ſuch a pace, that they reached Jaquin at five in the afternoon of the ſame day.

We now take leave of our traveller; who, notwithſtanding his journey, and all the methods he could uſe, found great difficulties, from the roguery of the Jaquins, before he could get his loading; and turn our eyes towards the conquered nation, which we have ſo long neglected.

* It is this jealouſy that has ſtopped the progreſs of all the European inquirers into the geography and hiſtory of this part of Africa; and which will probably remain an inſuperable obſtruction to it, for many ages, unleſs we could employ theſe Moors or Malayes, if found adequate to the taſk, and willing to undertake it. They ſeem to be the only people who have a *paſſe par-tout*, and who travel much farther than the Caravans. The Malayes, here, are detained, as being priſoners of war; but traders would not be under ſuch reſtrictions, as we may ſee by comparing the treatment of Lambe, with that of other white people.—J. F.

CHAP. IX.

Diſtreſs of the Whydahs. — Oſſue *driven back to the iſlands.* — Eyeos *interfere.* — Dahomans *fly.* — Teſtefole's *conduct.* — Whydah's *ſecond attempt—without ſucceſs.*

THE Whydahs thus diſperſed, and in the greateſt diſtreſs, their King ſent ambaſſadors to Dahomy, to offer his ſubjection; but Trudo rejected his offer, under pretence that his conqueſt could not be ſecure, whilſt that monarch was alive: giving them at the ſame time to underſtand, that the ſurrender of their King was the only means whereby they could hope to be reſtored to their country.

But their loyalty was ſuperior to every temptation; they preferred wretchedneſs to treachery; and were content to drag on a miſerable exiſtence, till an occaſion ſhould offer, to recover by exertion, what their apathy had loſt. They had fled, at the firſt onſet, in multitudes, to the iſlands near Great Popo; and the conqueror, by keeping up a conſiderable army in Whydah, had prevented their return to their own kingdom.* They continued in thoſe receſſes till they were reduced to the utmoſt extremity, and obliged to ſell their ſervants, and even their children,

* *Snelgrave*, p. 86, ſays, "About May, 1729, he permitted a great number of the common people to return, and they began to build houſes near the Engliſh and French forts;" but of theſe no mention is afterwards made. Perhaps this permiſſion is confounded with the following tranſaction of Oſſue and his people.—J. F.

children, to purchaſe ſubſiſtence from the neighbouring Popoes.

In this ſtate they remained ſeveral months; when the Dahoman army, at Xavier, being conſiderably diminiſhed, one of the King of Whydah's great captains, who was called *Oſſue*,* left the iſlands, and attempted to make a ſettlement, under the protection of the French Fort, about four miles from Xavier; but the Dahomans coming againſt them, they took ſhelter in the French fort, which, in the aſſault, was blown up, and many of the blacks periſhed. The French governor, together with Oſſue, and ſome others, made their eſcape to the Engliſh fort, where they were received and protected. Oſſue, and ſeveral of the men, got ſafe over to their iſland; but the women and children fell into the hands of the Dahomans, who ſold many of them to the ſhips then in the road.

The Dahomans expoſtulated with the Engliſh on their interference; and on being told by Governor Wilſon it proceeded from their ſudden aſſault on the French, his neighbours, which he conſidered as the common cauſe of all the European ſettlers, they diſcovered a ſcene of treachery in the French governor that was ſhocking to hear, though it appeared, in ſpite of his proteſtations to the contrary, to be but too true. They affirmed, that after having received Oſſue and his followers under his protection, he had ſent, by a French ſurgeon then at the court, to invite the Dahomans down to deſtroy them, promiſing that he

* Oſſue, or Aſſue, was a notable caboceer at Whydah, when Du Marchais was there, in 1725. V. *Prevoſt*, Vol. iii. p. 473. And the iſland where he and the King reſided, I find, in ſome MSS. Sea Journals of 1736, was called Oſſue, or Aſſue's Iſland.—J. F.

would not afford them any protection; that, from finding he had acted so contrary to his promise, and not from any quarrel with his nation, or any of the whites, they had proceeded in this manner. Trudo sent a message, upbraiding the French governor with his perfidy, but at the same time acquainting him, that having no quarrel with his nation, he would give orders to repair the fort, if he required it; but if he liked it better, he was at liberty to depart, with all his countrymen, whither they pleased. This governor afterwards met with a severe reward for his duplicity, being murdered by the people he had so abused and injured.

After this disaster, the Whydahs found means to lay their situation before the King of Eyeo, and to implore his assistance. This, added to the instances of several fugitive princes, then at the Eyeo court, whose fathers had been dispossessed of their kingdoms, and afterwards slain by the Dahomans, at length produced the wished-for effect. A great army was raised with all expedition, and ordered to make a second descent on Dahomy.* This news, no less fatal than unexpected, having reached the ears of Trudo, he found there was not a moment to be lost. His former plan of flying to the sea coasts, he judged now to be inexpedient; as the Whydahs, and their neighbours, who at length had found the necessity of a firm alliance against the common enemy, were ready to give him great annoyance in such a situation.

He therefore resolved to bury his riches, burn his towns, and fly into the woods and thickets with his people.† This he immediately

* About the middle of the year 1728.

† *Snelgrave*, 121. This, it seems, is a common thing with the blacks, in such a situation.

mediately put in execution; but Appragah, and his adherents, of whom mention was formerly made, not getting ſo ſoon into motion, were overtaken by the Eyeos, and many of them made priſoners; all the treaſure of Appragah was ſeized; and it was not without difficulty that himſelf eſcaped, attended by only a few ſervants.

The enemy, diſappointed in their principal aim, ſought the Dahomans in their retreats, and deſtroyed many of them; purſuing up the reſt ſo cloſely, that they were reduced to the utmoſt neceſſity: * but they bore theſe hardſhips with patience, knowing that the rainy ſeaſon,† and want of forage, would ſoon drive away their enemies; which happened accordingly: for, about the beginning of May, the Eyeos decamped, and left the Dahomans to rebuild, or rather repair, their towns and villages, ‡ from which they had now been driven ſeveral months.

Whilſt Dahomy experienced this calamity, various reports prevailed concerning the King. Some affirmed that he was killed; others, that he was ſo reduced as never to be able to diſturb his neighbours again; and many more teemed with circumſtances

* *Snelgrave* ſays they were obliged to eat many of their ſlaves, p. 122.

† The rainy ſeaſon begins about the middle of May, and laſts to the beginning of Auguſt. It is very malignant to both blacks and white. The rains fall more like fountains than drops, and as hot as if warmed over the fire. *Phillips*, p. 215. Churchill's edition.

‡ The houſes being built of mud or clay, were not much hurt by the fire; it was principally the bamboo rafters, and the thatch that covered them, which they had to repair.—J. F.

cumſtances equally to his diſadvantage; towards all which reports belief kept pace with deſire: for ſince the Dahomans had been in poſſeſſion of the ſouthern kingdoms, in ſpite of all the promiſes made to the ſeveral white men belonging to the factories, and notwithſtanding all the labours of Snelgrave, trade had gone but ſlowly and irregularly forward; Trudo aiming more at conqueſt, and at ſtriking terror into his enemies, by the numbers of his captives ſacrificed, than at the advantage uſually made of them. This cauſed the Factories to wiſh for the reeſtabliſhment of the Whydahs, who, though they had been exorbitant in their impoſts, had been at once the moſt commercial, as well as the moſt civilized and polite people, on the whole coaſt. It is therefore no wonder, under theſe conſiderations, that *Teſſefole*, the Engliſh governor, a hot and unthinking man, ſhould eagerly invite the King of Whydah to leave his barren iſland, and come, with all his people, once more to take poſſeſſion of his kingdom. The Monarch, whoſe ears were not ſhut to ſuch a propoſition, and who had now learned courage in the ſchool of Adverſity, unwieldy as he was, marched into Whydah,* at the head of an army of fifteen thouſand men, of which ſome thouſands were Popoes, whoſe aſſiſtance he had acquired. With theſe he encamped under the French and Engliſh forts, where he remained a conſiderable time before the King of Dahomy was acquainted with the tranſaction.

For the army of obſervation, formerly kept at Xavier, having been recalled on the Eyeo invaſion, and the Dahomans being now employed in the repairs of their different towns, ſcarce thought of any other matter. Beſides, they had too mean an opinion

* About Auguſt, 1729.



Chevillon sculp.

Armed Women, with the King at their head, going to War. Page. 64. 176.

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opinion of the ſpirit of the Whydahs, to think them capable of any exertion; and it was not till having nearly finiſhed their work, and ſending down a parcel of ſlaves to the forts, to purchaſe ſuch European goods as probably they were in want of, that they found thoſe forts ſurrounded with an army of Whydahs.

Amazed at this, they quickly returned, and informed their maſter of what they had ſeen. The King was ſtruck with the news. The number of his ſoldiers had been greatly reduced by the Eyeos; he had lately ſent an army againſt ſome of the inland countries; ſo that he might have reaſonably been excuſed, had he conſidered his remaining troops as inſufficient to attack the combined force of Whydah and Popo. But Trudo, equally politic as brave, and who had before experienced the timidity of one part of his enemies, thought the very appearance of number would be ſufficient to put them to flight; the other he knew he was ſtill more than able to cope withal: he thereupon ſpeedily collected together his remaining troops, forming with them the vanguard of his army. The rear he compoſed of a great number of women, armed like ſoldiers, having their proper officers, and furniſhed like regular troops, with drums, colours, and umbrellas, making at a diſtance a very formidable appearance. With theſe he marched againſt the combined armies; who, ſurpriſed at the appearance of ſuch a force, when they expected the Dahomans were quite reduced, began to debate on the propriety of a retreat. Oſſue and the Popoes determined to ſtand their ground; and the King encouraged his part to do the like. The battle begun. Oſſue, and the Popo general, attacked the Dahoman right wing with ſo much vigour, that they drove them for ſome time before them; but the troops under the Whydah King gave way at the firſt onſet, and fled,

not-

notwithſtanding all the efforts of their leader, who wounded ſeveral of them with his lance in their flight. The Dahomans, ſeeing this, rallied; and, in their turn, attacking the rear of Oſſue's troops, put them and the Popoes to the rout. The King took refuge in the Engliſh fort, whence, by the connivance of *Teſtefole*, he eſcaped in the night to his former aſylum.

CHAP. X.

Trudo *recruits his army.—Accuſed of impolicy and perfidy.*—Teſtefole's *raſhneſs and puniſhment.*—Trudo *makes peace with the* Eyeos.—Mahee *war.—Its conſequences.*

TRUDO was not unacquainted with the part which the Governor had played on this occaſion, and highly reſented it; but diſguiſing his feelings for the preſent, and leaving a ſmall army at Xavier, he repaired to Abomey. Here a numerous banditti of all the ſurrounding nations reſorting to him, he found himſelf, in a few months, as ſtrong and powerful as before the Eyeo war. This however was a very impolitic way of recruiting his forces, when he had one ſo much better in his power: for this Prince, however ſagacious in other reſpects, had never once thought that increaſe of dominions, without an increaſe of people, weakens inſtead of adding ſtrength to a kingdom; nor that a nation, however numerous, may be ſo diſperſed over a large territory, as to be unable to defend any part of it.

Inſtead

Inſtead of conciliating the affections of the conquered, and adding them to the number of his people, he thought of nothing but their deſtruction; by which means he drove into other countries, ſecured from his invaſions, ſome hundreds of thouſands of valuable ſubjects, whoſe places he was now obliged to ſupply with the refuſe and outcaſts of every nation.

Nay, ſo eager was he for the deſtruction of thoſe, on whoſe poſſeſſions he had ſeized, that he ſometimes added falſehood and treachery to his other means of accompliſhing it. He gave his word to a number of the people of Ardra, that on payment of a ſmall tribute they ſhould have leave to return to the quiet enjoyment of their own country. On the faith of this many thouſands actually returned, built houſes, cultivated lands, and were purſuing all the arts of peace, when the Dahomans, ſuddenly falling upon them, killed, or made captive, all who could not eſcape by flight: an action equally impolitic, unjuſt, and cruel; which did more hurt to Trudo's affairs than all that had been done them by his enemies; and tarniſhed all the glories of his conqueſts.

It was from this impolitic conduct, of deſtroying the nations he ſubdued, that the European trade, which ſeemed in Trudo to be a collateral object with conqueſt itſelf, gradually fell off,* ſo that the ſhips were detained on the coaſts till the patience of both governors and traders was exhauſted. *Teſtefole* was ſo far exaſperated at this, together with the behaviour of the Dahoman traders, which was in general very inſolent, that he took every opportunity of teſtifying his diſpleaſure. He treated any of them that came to the fort very roughly; cauſed one of

* *Snelgrave*, p. 136.

their principal men to be whipped at the flag-ſtaff, telling him, when he complained of this great indignity, that he would ſerve his King in the ſame manner, if he had him in his power. This fooliſh conduct, added to his former interference, loſt him his life; for Trudo, highly offended, cauſed him to be watched, and taken by ſurprize: he was ſent, bound hands and feet, to the King, who would not ſee him; but delivering him into the hands of ſome about him, they cajoled him out of a quantity of goods, under pretence of ranſom, and then put him to death in a moſt cruel manner.* When this outrage was complained of, Trudo cunningly excuſed himſelf, by ſaying "he gave no orders "for his death; he only deſired ſome of his principal people "to carry him to Xavier, where they might do with him what "they pleaſed; but he little thought they would have uſed a "white gentleman in ſuch a manner." Notwithſtanding this aſſertion, it is very plain that his officers knew his mind; for, though he was earneſtly requeſted to enquire after, and puniſh the offenders, no ſuch ſtep was ever taken: he only obſerved, upon another occaſion, that what had been done to *Teſtefole*, his own imprudence had brought upon himſelf; and hoped the African Company would ſend a fitter perſon to govern their fort in future.

About this time, being apprehenſive of another very diſagreeable viſit from the Eyeos, as ſoon as the ſeaſon would permit

* *Snelgrave* ſays, that having faſtened him to ſtakes fixed in the ground, with his face to the earth, they cut open his arms, back, thighs, and legs, in ſeveral places, filling the wounds with a mixture of ſalt, pepper, and lime-juice; in which torment, after he had remained ſome time, they cut off his head, divided his body in pieces, broiled them on the coals, and ate them; boaſting to ſome Portugueſe gentlemen, who upbraided them with it, that Engliſh beef was very good. *Snel.* p. 133-4.

permit them to march; to avert ſuch deſign, and ingratiate himſelf in the favour of their King, the Dahoman Monarch ſent ambaſſadors to him, loaded with rich preſents, amongſt which was one of his handſomeſt daughters. Theſe were graciouſly received; and the ambaſſadors having gained over ſome of the grandees about the King, by preſents of large pieces of coral, which the Eyeos eſteem above all things, they by theſe means obtained for their maſter a very advantageous peace; which was ſhortly after further confirmed by the arrival of one of the King of Eyeo's daughters, whom he ſent to Trudo for a wife, and who was received with every demonſtration of joy by the King and the whole nation. *

The Dahomans, being thus delivered from their anxiety, found themſelves at liberty to purſue their other deſigns; and accordingly directed their force againſt their neighbours, the Mahees,† which probably was the nation they were engaged with, at the time of the laſt reduction of the Whydahs. We are not acquainted with the motives that brought on this war; ‡ but we find that Trudo here was baffled by the ſame contrivance which he had uſed in defending himſelf againſt the Eyeos: for the Mahees, taking to their woods and mountains, ſo annoyed and harraſſed the Dahomans, that, on the approach of the rainy ſeaſon, the whole army was diſcontented, and murmuring to

* *Snelgrave*, 135.

† *Snelgrave* calls them the Yahoos; but this is the now eſtabliſhed pronunciation. For an account of the Mahees, vide Poſt. Life of Ahadee. Ch. 3.

‡ *Snelgrave* ſays, Trudo had ſent an army into their country to take ſlaves; but the ſequel does not ſeem to juſtify this interpretation of Trudo's intentions.

return home. This unuſual behaviour of his troops exaſperated the fiery and impatient ſpirit of Trudo; he upbraided their puſillanimity, and, without any ceremony, put ſeveral principal officers to death, for daring to mention a retreat. This ſeverity, though it ſuppreſſed their murmurs, did not leſſen their diſcontent: accordingly many deſertions took place, of both ſoldiers and officers; but the moſt alarming was that of one of his ſons, who, with 4000 men, fled to the King of Weemy.*

Trudo, nothing diſmayed, was determined on victory or death; he accordingly animated his remaining troops, who, following his example, fell on the Mahees with ſuch ſpirit, as drove them from their receſſes, and put them to flight. It was then that, conſidering the fatigued ſtate of his army, and the inconvenience of the preſent ſeaſon, he contented himſelf with the victory obtained, and declining further purſuit, led his army back to Dahomy.

CHAP. XI.

Diſcontent of the Jaquins. — Trudo's *endeavours to reconcile them.* — *Their conſpiracy* — *and deſtruction.* — Trudo's *death and character.*

JAQUIN, after having been received under the protection of Dahomy, hoped to have had a flouriſhing trade, and even to have engroſſed that of the whole coaſt; but finding Trudo's ideas wholly employed on conqueſt, and that the Dahomans around

* This probably was the eldeſt ſon *Zingah*, who perhaps was deprived of the right of ſucceſſion on this account. Vide poſt. Life of Ahadee, ch. i.

around them were as unfit for commerce as their maſter, they became very diſcontented. Beſides, learning by his treatment of others, how little they could depend upon the promiſes of their conqueror, they lived continually on the alarm. Accordingly they always kept a number of canoes ready to aſſiſt their flight, in caſe of a ſudden attack from the Dahomans; and even ſent their wives and children, together with the moſt valuable of their goods, to an iſland on the ſea-coaſt, about ten leagues to the eaſtward of Jaquin, under the protection of the King of Appah: * whither they knew the enemy, from their fear of the water and ignorance of navigation, would not follow them.

Trudo did what he could to quiet their minds, but they were never long together ſatisfied with the Dahomans conduct; and now reports being current, that the King's force was conſiderably reduced, and his remaining troops diſaffected, they thought it a proper time to ſhake off the yoke. Accordingly, with the advice and aſſiſtance of the Dutch governor, *Mynheer Hertog*, they ſtirred up the King of Weemy, and other neighbouring princes, to join them, by repreſenting this great deſign as equally important to them all; promiſing them, at the ſame time, the neceſſary ſupplies of arms and ammunition.

Beſides, having conſidered the advantage of ſtrong-holds, whither on occaſion the weakeſt might retire, and check, or even repel a ſuperior force; the Jaquins intended, under the direction of the Europeans, to conſtruct fortifications, that ſo nothing might

* The kingdom of Appah reaches from this iſland as far as the bay of Benin. *Snelgrave*, p. 82.

might be wanting to infure fuccefs. But Trudo had timely intimation of their intentions; and, under pretence of an expedition into the inland countries, quickly collected an army of fifteen thoufand men, which he put under the command of a faithful general, with public orders to march inland; thefe he complied with till night, when, according to his fecret inftructions, he fuddenly changed his courfe, and marched immediately to Jaquin, by the way of Whydah.

They arrived at Jaquin about dinner-time, and, though fo numerous, had almoft entered the town before they were difcovered. Under fo great a furprize and conftternation, it is no wonder at the confufion that followed. Slaughter and deftruction reigned every where; even the canoes prepared for the purpofe of efcape, in this alarm were of little ufe; for the Dahomans fo fpread themfelves, as almoft every where to intercept the fugitives. It was with difficulty that the King, or Lord of Jaquin, together with *Hertog*, and fome of the principal people, efcaped to Appah, which was alfo the refuge of fuch of the common people as could, by bravery or good fortune, make their way to the water-fide.

The flaughter and plunder that enfued may eafily be imagined, from what we have already feen of the Dahoman fpirit. *Hertog* loft all the riches of the factory; and the Lord of Jaquin, all that remained in his palace; but what he moft felt was the lofs of a much-beloved mother, who was in great eftteem with the people in general, and of whofe fate he could never afterwards obtain information.

Nor

Nor was the ſituation of the other Europeans found here, at this time, much better than that of *Hertog*. Their factories were rifled; themſelves made priſoners, and ſent up to the King of Dahomy, at Ardra, forty or fifty miles, on foot, under a vertical ſun, to the manifeſt danger of their lives. Indeed that prince had little inducement to pay them any further regard, having been very ill treated by the whites, notwithſtanding all his politeneſs and attention to them; yet, when they complained to him of their hard treatment, and that they had had neither victuals nor refreſhment ſince they were made priſoners, he haſtily went into an inner room, brought out a hatchet, broke open a caſk of beef, taken amongſt the plunder, and ordered ſeveral pieces to be dreſſed for them immediately.

As this tranſaction was ſo precipitate, ſome of the Europeans were much alarmed at the ſight of the hatchet, and the ſeeming agitation of the King, thinking their lives were in danger; but they were agreeably deceived: and though they remained ſome time in captivity, yet, on the remonſtrances of Mr. Dean, the Britiſh governor at Whydah, they were all at length releaſed.

This ſecond conqueſt of Jaquin happened on the 22d of March, 173$\frac{1}{2}$; ſhortly after which Trudo fell ill, and ſubmitted to the univerſal conqueror. The circumſtances of his death are not handed down to us; but we know that the fame of his great actions continues to fill the minds of the people of Dahomy to this day. They not only revere his memory, but even ſwear by his name, as the moſt ſolemn of all aſſeverations.

Trudo, conſidered as a conqueror, ſeems little inferior to any other of that claſs, which has ſwoln the page of hiſtory.

Like

Like them he waded to glory, through an ocean of innocent blood; and like them experienced the viciſſitudes of fortune. Yet he never once loſt his magnanimity, nor wept, like Alexander, when his generals refuſed to follow him: he knew how to enforce obedience; and drove, when he could not lead, them to conqueſt. It is true, bred as the nation was to war, it ſeldom wanted ſuch incitement. We ſhall find, in the courſe of this hiſtory, inſtances of an heroic ſpirit that would do honour to any nation; yet, when that ſpirit flagged, Trudo was at hand to rouſe it: and if he is accuſed of want of feeling, it will be found to be a true belligerent inſenſibility, alike to his own calamities, and thoſe of other people.

Though rigid to thoſe who oppoſed his arms, he was mild and generous to ſuch as readily ſubmitted to them; witneſs his treatment of Appragah. His politeneſs to the Europeans was exemplary; and which, in ſpite of the injuries he received from a part of them, he honourably continued to the reſt. From traces of ſuch greatneſs of mind we may juſtly incline to believe, that, where his conduct has appeared the moſt reprehenſible, it has ariſen from our ignorance of his motives, which ſhould be known to form a proper judgment of human actions.

His perſon, as deſcribed by Snelgrave, was middle-ſized and full-bodied; and, as near as he could judge, his age was, at that time, (1727) about five and forty: his face was pitted with the ſmall pox, or perhaps tattoo'd in imitation of it, as is cuſtomary in that country; nevertheleſs there was ſomething in his countenance very taking, and withal majeſtic. Upon the whole,

whole, ſays that writer, I found him the moſt extraordinary man of his colour that I had ever converſed with. *

At his death he left to his heirs a kingdom much enlarged; yet as it was enlarged by conqueſt, without being ſecured by policy, he left with it hereditary wars, which, like thorns in its diadem, have tortured the royal brow of Dahomy to this day.

* *Snelgrave*, p. 75.

HISTORY OF DAHOMY.

PART THE SECOND.

CONTAINING

THE REIGN

OF

BOSSA AHADEE,

KING OF DAHOMY.

CHAP. I.

Boſſa Ahadee *choſen in preference to his elder brother* Zingah.—*Murders all of the name of Boſſa.*—Zingah's *rebellion and death.*—*Rebellion of the* Mayhou.

TRUDO's death was concealed, to prevent the horrid confuſion and outrages, as is cuſtomary upon ſuch occaſions, until the prime miniſters, who are ſtyled the Tamegan and Mayhou,* had conſulted together, and determined which of his

* The former is the prime miniſter; the latter is maſter of the ceremonies.

his ſons was to ſucceed; a truſt which devolves to thoſe officers, upon the deceaſe of their ſovereign: for though the ſon who is firſt born, after his father becomes veſted with the regal dignity, is eſteemed heir apparent to his dominions; yet if he appears to thoſe two miniſters, from ſome defect or vice, either of body or mind, to be unworthy of this exalted ſtation, they have the power of rejecting him, and of chooſing, from among the other children, him who ſeems to be moſt deſerving or beſt qualified to rule over them.* Upon the preſent occaſion, they rejected the eldeſt ſon,† and were unanimous in fixing their choice on Ahadee; whoſe reign proved a continued ſeries of miſery to his unhappy country, and who, notwithſtanding ſome good qualities, was a bad king, and a worſe man.

The Tamegan and Mayhou having determined on their choice, announced Trudo's death, and proclaimed Ahadee king. His elder brother Zingah, thus finding his hopes diſappointed, and himſelf aggrieved by the loſs of an inheritance, with the expectation of which he had flattered himſelf, founded privately the diſpoſition of his friends. On applying to thoſe upon whom he had conferred favours in his father's life-time, he received the aſſurance that numbers were willing to eſpouſe

* This we find likewiſe to have been the cuſtom in the kingdom of *Whydah*; where, like what happens alſo in *Dahomy*, a general plunder prevailed, until the choice of the new king was publicly announced. There is ſomething remarkable in this temporary anarchy, and return, as it were, into the ſtate of nature, as if it were originally meant to make the people eager for the revival of ſovereign power, and a ſettled government. R. N.

† Probably this was that ſon who, in the Mahee war, deſerted from his father. Vide ante p. 60. J. F.

his cauſe; and he began to concert meaſures to ſurpriſe his brother, and ſeize the government either by ſtratagem or force. Ahadee, however, having received intelligence of his deſign, Zingah, and the principal conſpirators, were ſeized, when they were juſt on the point of taking up arms to aſſert his claim. The prince was ſewed up in a hammock at Abomey, from whence he was carried to Whydah, where he was put into a canoe, taken about two leagues out to ſea, and there thrown over-board and drowned. The law of the country does not allow the ſacred blood of the royal family to be ſhed, but appoints this puniſhment for their offences. Such was the end of Zingah, whoſe adherents were likewiſe all put to death.

The King having thus got rid of his competitor, and being now ſecure in the peaceable poſſeſſion of his dominions, threw off the maſk, and gave an unbounded indulgence to his inclinations, which unhappily were of the worſt kind. One of the firſt edicts of his reign was, that every man of the name of Boſſa, ſhould be put to death; which cruel order was punctually executed throughout his dominions. Old and young indiſcriminately ſuffered; and many innocent and uſeful men were loſt to the community, to gratify the vanity of a wretch, who thought it an inſult to majeſty, that a ſubject ſhould bear the ſame name as the ſovereign.

Though Fame has tranſmitted this enormity to poſterity, ſhe has been kind to his memory in burying in oblivion the repeated acts of cruelty and oppreſſion, which at laſt rouſed the Mayhou, and induced him in the year 1735 to take up arms, to free his country from the tyranny under which it groaned.

Great,

Great, indeed, muſt have been the provocations that induced the Mayhou to take this deſperate ſtep: for it is the diſpoſition of the Dahomans to think favourably of their king, and to approve his actions. They reverence him with a mixture of love and fear, little ſhort of adoration. When I aſked a Dahoman, juſt before his going to battle, if he was not apprehenſive of finding the enemy too ſtrong; "I think of my "king," ſaid Dakou,* "and then I dare engage five of the "enemy myſelf." I am anxious for your ſafety, ſaid I, and ſhall be happy that you eſcape the dangers of the day. "It "is not material," replied he; "my head belongs to the king, "not to myſelf: if he pleaſe to ſend for it, I am ready to "reſign it; or if it be ſhot through in battle, I am ſatisfied— "it is in his ſervice." Even at this day, † after a tyranny of forty years, every Dahoman poſſeſſes the ſame ſentiments; their loyalty and attachment remain unſhaken. Though the people are daily falling victims to the avarice or anger of their prince, and there is not an individual in his dominions who has not loſt ſome near and dear connexion by his orders, yet their misfortunes are not attributed to him, but entirely to their own indiſcretions; and whatever the king does, they are perſuaded is right. Such blind ſubmiſſion and obedience is probably no where elſe to be found. ‡

The Mayhou, who had ſeen better days in the ſervice of Trudo, under whom he had been brought up, finding all his

* A faithful ſervant whom I employed in my factory, but who afterwards fell undeſervedly under the King's diſpleaſure, and was ſold, by his order, for a ſlave. R. N.

† 1772. When Mr. Norris was collecting theſe memoirs. J. F.

‡ The inland Kings were no leſs deſpotic in the time of Leo; and were approached with the like ceremonies and proſtrations. J. F.

his perſuaſions ineffectual to reclaim the young king, who was deaf to his advice, could no longer remain a mere ſpectator of the diſtreſſes of his country. He had erred in his choice when he preferred Ahadee to his brother; and judging it a duty which he owed to his country, to free it from the tyrant whom he had been inſtrumental in placing upon the throne, he withdrew from court, and ſoon appeared in open rebellion at the head of a powerful army. Thus, in addition to the evils with which Ahadee had afflicted his country, he plunged it into the horrors of a civil war. The iſſue of this, had the event been equal to the juſtice of it, might have been fatal to him: but it terminated otherwiſe by the exertions of the Agaow, or commander of the royal army, in which were many of the brave veterans who had ſo often conquered under Trudo. He entirely defeated the rebels: the Mayhou, and many of his friends, fell in the engagement; the priſoners taken on this occaſion were put to death; and the few who eſcaped, having nothing to hope from the king's clemency, and to avoid the tortures intended for them, fled into the neighbouring ſtates, where they ended their days in exile.

The King ſeems to have harboured no vindictive reſentment againſt the Mayhou's family; for he ſoon after advanced his younger brother to his office, wherein he continued till his death, which happened in the ſucceeding reign; a circumſtance rather extraordinary in Ahadee's conduct, as he has left us very few inſtances of his clemency, in offences leſs heinous than that of the Mayhou. When a man is condemned to death, or to ſlavery, in conſequence of having committed, or (which in Dahomy often amounts to the ſame) of having been accuſed of a crime, his effects are, by law, forfeited to the king; his domeſtics, relations,

relations, and friends, are all ſeized; ſome of them perhaps ſuffer death; the remainder are always ſold for ſlaves. This being the caſe, it is evident that, when the delinquent happens to be a man of conſequence, with numerous dependants and connexions, who are deprived of their lives or liberty on his account, the ſtate muſt ſuffer a very conſiderable loſs: yet this is a calamity which often happens; and, together with the carnage of war, muſt have contributed greatly to depopulate this unhappy country.

CHAP. II.

The invaſion of the Eyeos.—*Diſtreſſed ſituation of the* Dahomans.—Ahadee's *kindneſs to the Britiſh Governor.*—*The* Dahomans *are haraſſed by the irruptions of the* Eyeos.—*An accommodation takes place.*

ALTHOUGH the internal tranquillity of the kingdom was reſtored by the Mayhou's defeat and death, the Dahomans did not long enjoy the ſweets of peace: a ſtorm unexpectedly aroſe from another quarter. The Eyeos, their former dread and ſcourge, again began to threaten them; whoſe numbers they feared, even more than their proweſs.

The Dahomans, to give an idea of the ſtrength of an Eyeo army, aſſert, that when they go to war, the general ſpreads the hide of a buffalo, which is naturally very thick and tough, before the door of his tent, and pitches a ſpear in the ground, on

on each ſide of it, between which the ſoldiers march, until the barefooted multitude, which paſs over the hide, have worn a hole through it: as ſoon as this happens, he preſumes that his forces are numerous enough to take the field. Though the Dahomans may poſſibly exaggerate, the Eyeos are certainly a very populous, warlike, and powerful nation.

It was in the year 1738 that they again invaded Dahomy, with an immenſe army, laying the country waſte, with fire and ſword, to the gates of Abomey. Here the Dahomans had collected their whole ſtrength, determined to ſtand their ground, and wait the arrival of the enemy. Though inferior in numbers, they were not intimidated. They had once fled from them, and now remembered the evils they had ſuffered by their flight. They knew their valour was never called forth upon a more trying occaſion: however, they felt that their country, and every thing that was dear to them, lay at ſtake; and they determined to do all that could be expected in their defence. Accordingly, when the Eyeos made the attack in the morning, they received them warmly, repulſed them twice, with great ſlaughter, performing ſuch wonders, that victory for ſome time hung in ſuſpenſe; but freſh ſupplies of the enemy conſtantly pouring in to replace thoſe who fell, the Dahomans, worn out with fatigue, were at laſt obliged to yield to ſuperior numbers. They retreated, under cover of the night, into Abomey, having killed of the Eyeos above twice the amount of their own army. Their ſituation now became truly calamitous, and they had no proſpect before them, but the utter extinction of their name and nation.

Abomey

Abomey is a very large town, ſurrounded with a deep moat; but it has no wall nor breaſt-work to defend the beſieged, nor are there any ſprings of water in it: conſequently, it could not be long tenable. The firſt care of the Dahomans on the night after the battle, whilſt the Eyeos were too much fatigued to interrupt them, was to ſend away the wounded, together with the women and children, to Zaſſa, a town about twenty-five miles from Abomey. Ahadee, who was already there, having learned the unfortunate iſſue of the day, immediately fled, with his women and treaſure, to an almoſt inacceſſible retreat, about four hours journey from Zaſſa, the path leading to which is extremely intricate, and known to very few of the Dahomans themſelves: nor is this retirement ever viſited, except in caſes of the laſt extremity, when the King is obliged to fly for the ſafety of his perſon. Mr. *Gregory*, governor of the Britiſh fort at Whydah, happening to be at Zaſſa at this time, the King was pleaſed to take him in his ſuite; which was eſteemed an extraordinary mark of reſpect, as none but the King's own family take ſhelter there.

The Agaow, or general at Abomey, continued to defend the place, and amuſe the enemy, until he learned that the King was ſafe, and that Zaſſa was evacuated: he then took the advantage of a dark night, conducted the remains of his army ſafely through the enemy, and fled; leaving the town to the mercy of the Eyeos, who afterwards plundered aud burnt it, as they alſo did Calmina and Zaſſa. They lived in the country at diſcretion, as long as they could procure ſubſiſtence; but that failing in a few months, they returned to their own country. Had the Eyeos, when they engaged at Abomey, detached a part of their

numerous army, and attacked Zaffa at the ſame time, the King and all his treaſure muſt inevitably have fallen into their hands: for this neglect, their general was diſgraced upon his return.

The Eyeos continued for ſeveral years afterwards to haraſs the Dahomans with an annual viſit, who never thought it prudent after this to riſk an engagement; but, when appriſed of the enemy being in motion, they uſed to evacuate their towns, divide into ſmall parties, and ſhelter themſelves as well as they could in their faſtneſſes and woods. Ahadee uſed all his efforts to obtain an accommodation, offering the Eyeos any reaſonable compenſation to refrain from hoſtilities; but it was difficult to ſatisfy their demands. They claimed, in conſequence of a former treaty, an annual tribute, the payment of which had been omitted ſince the time of Trudo. Though the amount of theſe arrears was conſiderable, freſh demands were alſo added: the Eyoes looking upon the conqueſt of Whydah as an inexhauſtible ſource of wealth to the King of Dahomy. The expectations of the invaders, upon the whole, were ſo exorbitant, that Ahadee found it impracticable to ſatisfy them; ſo that they continued to ravage the country of the Dahomans for ſeveral years, burning their towns, deſtroying their crops in harveſt, killing many people, and carrying numbers away into captivity. In the year 1747, however, the Eyeos conſented to an accommodation, and compromiſed the matter for a tribute, which the King of Dahomy continues to pay them annually at Calmina, in the month of November.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Ahadee *attempts to impoſe a King on the* Mahees.—*They make a vigorous reſiſtance, but are at laſt defeated.*—*The war renewed with various ſucceſs.*—*Peace concluded.*

WHILST the Dahomans were thus diſtreſſed by the Eyeos, they were engaged in two other bloody wars, each of which continued above thirty years: with the Mahees on one ſide; and with the old Whydahs, who had abandoned their country at the conqueſt, and were now aſſiſted by their neighbours the Popoes, on the other.

The Mahee country, which is very extenſive, lies to the weſtward of Dahomy, on its borders. It is divided into ſeveral ſmall ſtates, each governed by its own laws, and independent of one another: theſe ſtates, which are of the republican form, unite for the common ſafety, when dangers threaten any of the confederated members. The war with them was entirely provoked by Ahadee. Ever ſince the death of Trudo they had ſhewn themſelves diſpoſed to live in friendſhip with him, but his reſtleſs ſpirit would not ſuffer them to remain in peace. He claimed a right of interference in their national concerns, inſiſted on altering their mode of government, and, upon their their refuſal to comply, declared war againſt them.

He had heard, in his youth, that againſt every nation but Eyeo, the Dahoman arms were irreſiſtible. He reſolved, there-

fore, to abolish the republic, and give the Mahees a king. But he wanted talents proportioned to this arduous enterprise. The monarch, the statesman, and the general, had all been united in the person of Trudo, who constantly fought at the head of his troops. Ahadee, immured in his seraglio, where thousands administered to his pleasures, expected a prompt devotion to his will, and flattered himself with an easy conquest, thinking nothing more was expedient for that purpose, than to signify to the Agaow, "*That his house wanted thatch* *."

Ahadee's ostensible motives for the commencement of hostilities, were, "that his subjects travelling through the Mahee "country to more distant nations, for the purposes of trade, "had been frequently oppressed by heavy taxes, arbitrarily "imposed by the states of Mahee, through which they had "occasion to pass; that these states were so numerous and "avaricious, that it was impossible, in the present situation of "affairs, to regulate their demands, for the future security of "his subjects, and their property; but that if a king were "appointed to govern the whole Mahee nation, treaties could "then be established, to the mutual advantage of both king-"doms." This, in fact, was mere pretence; for no part of Ahadee's conduct had testified that regard for the welfare and interest of his people, which his language on the present occasion seemed to manifest. The true reason was, that one of his favourite wives, who was a Mahee woman, had a brother whom he wished to advance to this dignity: but the Mahees

* This is the phrase used in giving orders to his generals to make war, and alludes to the custom of placing the heads of the enemy killed in battle, or those of the prisoners of distinction, on the roof of the guard-houses at the gates of his palaces.

Mahees refuſed to relinquiſh their independence, or to ſubmit to be governed by a tyrant.

Ahadee however perſiſting in his reſolution, a war commenced in 1737, and was carried on with all that ſavage fury which is cuſtomary among barbarous nations. The priſoners of diſtinction were put to death, and the other captives conſigned to ſlavery. Theſe were the beſt terms allowed by either party. Many battles were fought with various ſucceſs; ſometimes the Mahees, ſometimes the Dahomans, were victorious; but neither would relinquiſh their pretenſions: to follow them through all their ſcenes of ſlaughter, would be a diſguſting taſk, and indeed almoſt impoſſible.

The ſevereſt blow which the Mahees received was in 1752, about fifteen years after the commencement of the war. They had been unſucceſsful in ſome battles, and were unable to keep the field. There is, in their country, a very high mountain, called Boagry, which is almoſt inacceſſible by nature, and which had been hitherto deemed impregnable: thither the Mahees fled, with the ſhattered remains of their army. The Agaow followed, pillaged, and laid waſte the country, without oppoſition; and having impoſed ſuch terms as he pleaſed on the vanquiſhed, ſat down with the Dahoman army, and inveſted Boagry. This place, as a camp, had one fault; it was as difficult to quit, when occaſion required, as it was arduous of acceſs. Many ſkirmiſhes happened betwixt the beſiegers and beſieged, theſe making frequent ſallies, and thoſe many attempts to force their way up the mountain. The Mahees had plantations of corn, and plenty of water upon Boagry, which enabled them to perſevere in a long reſiſtance.

The

The Agaow had inveſted this place near twelve months, without being able to gain any conſiderable advantage; when the King, impatient for victory, or ſolicited by his favourite, ſent his general all the aſſiſtance that he was able to draw together, and ordered him to hazard every thing for the reduction of Boagry, whatever might be the loſs of men on the occaſion. The Agaow, who was by this time well acquainted with the mountain, led on his men to this dangerous enterpriſe, with the determination either to conquer, or die in the attempt. He attacked it in every practicable part. The Mahees made an obſtinate reſiſtance, killing an immenſe number of their enemy; but at laſt, the bravery of the Dahomans, and their ſuperior numbers, ſurmounted every difficulty: they drove the Mahees from their entrenchments, and gained poſſeſſion of the ſummit. A prodigious ſlaughter enſued, for there was no poſſibility of eſcaping; the unfortunate remnant which the ſword had ſpared, were led in triumph, captive to Abomey; where the chiefs were put to death, and the reſt ſold for ſlaves.

The King, who was at this time alſo warmly engaged with the old Whydahs and Popoes, as we ſhall preſently ſhew, had occaſion for all his troops to reinforce his army for their reduction. This induced him to deſiſt from further hoſtilities againſt the Mahees for the preſent, and even to conſent to a truce with them; but as this was ill obſerved by either ſide, it proved of very ſhort continuance. The Mahees, though defeated, were far from being ſubjugated: thoſe who had fled, after hearing of the calamity which happened at Boagry, returned to their country, and were ſtill a formidable enemy; eſpecially as the Dahomans were now weakened by a ſeries of near twenty years of unprofitable wars.

Hoſtilities

Hoſtilities were ſoon renewed, and carried on as before, to the ruin of both countries, without producing any thing deciſive. Ahadee could not effect his purpoſe of impoſing a king on the Mahees; nor were they ſo far humbled, as to ſubmit to accept of one. They reſolved to retaliate the inſult at Boagry, by invading Dahomy; and actually penetrated into the diſmal foreſt which divides that kingdom from Ardra, in order by that manœuvre to intercept any ſuccours which might come from the kingdoms of Ardra or Whydah to the relief of Dahomy: but, in conſequence of ſome diviſion in their councils, a grievance to which republics are generally expoſed, they retired again without achieving any thing worthy of the boldneſs and wiſdom of the deſign.

In 1764, the advantage ſeemed to be on the ſide of the Dahomans, who then laid ſiege to Boagry a ſecond time; but had not a ſufficient force to render themſelves maſters of it. Several of Ahadee's ſons were upon this occaſion ſent with the army, to animate the ſoldiers by their preſence; and among them his favourite *Jupera*, whom his father ſent under the Agaow's care, to acquire military experience. This general had been encamped above twelve months around Boagry, when the King, impatient of delay, accuſed him of cowardice, and ſent the Mayhou to take the command, with orders to proceed immediately to the aſſault. When the Agaow found himſelf ſuperſeded and diſgraced, he judged that it was time to conſult his perſonal ſafety, well knowing the King's diſpleaſure to be implacable. Having Jupera, the heir apparent, in his power, he could have taken a ſevere revenge of his ungrateful maſter; but he generouſly delivered him into the Mayhou's care, and withdrew

drew privately to the Mahees, who received and protected him.

The Mayhou having made an unſucceſsful attempt againſt Boagry, was repulſed, and obliged to raiſe the ſiege: he therefore returned with his army to Dahomy; Jupera, to add to the unfortunate event, dying on the march. Ahadee, foiled in his views, and in fact unable to proſecute them any further, never afterwards attempted any thing of conſequence againſt the Mahees; and the perſon, in whoſe favour he had made ſo many fruitleſs exertions, dying ſome years afterwards, both parties ſeemed heartily tired of the war, and agreed to a peace in 1772, which continued to the end of Ahadee's reign.

CHAP. IV.

War againſt the old Whydahs *and* Popoes.—Ahadee's *treacherous behaviour to the Portugueſe Governor.—Brave defence of the Governor's ſervant.—The inhabitants of* Jacquin *extirpated.*

THE Whydahs, who had eſcaped from the arms of the Dahomans, took refuge among their neighbours the Popoes: a nation which borders on Whydah, to the weſtward; in a low, marſhy country, ſurrounded with ſwamps, and interſected with many

many branches of rivers, that form a multitude of iſlands, on which they live. Theſe refugees, aſſiſted by the Popoes, with whom they had incorporated, and by this time become as it were one nation, bore an inveterate hatred againſt the Dahomans, and, urged by a deſire of regaining their native country, omitted no occaſion to harraſs them. Their vicinity to Whydah; the facility with which they could tranſport their troops in canoes within two miles of Grigwhee, its chief town; the embarraſſed ſituation of Ahadee's affairs, whoſe country was frequently over-run by the Eyeos, and whoſe whole force was conſtantly employed either in repelling them, or reducing the Mahees, while this frontier was left defenceleſs; afforded them many opportunities of harraſſing the Dahomans on that ſide, and of making ſeveral ſucceſsful invaſions. They frequently got poſſeſſion of the ſhipping place, and interrupted the trade, by which the Europeans were often conſiderable ſufferers: the white people, their goods, or whatever property happened to be on the beach, falling a prey to them. Sometimes they made incurſions to the town of Grigwhee, where the European forts are ſituated; and, if repulſed by a ſuperior force, they readily eluded their purſuers, by retiring to the lakes: for the Dahomans have no addreſs in engagements on the water, as they are altogether unacquainted with the management of canoes. In the year 1741, an occaſion preſented itſelf, which, had it been rightly managed, might have concluded theſe differences, to the ſatisfaction of the Whydahs, and to the advantage of the Ahadee and his country: but, over-ruled by his evil genius, he made ſo bad uſe of this opportunity, as exaſperated that people more than ever.

The Whydahs, in their exile, ſtill adhered to the ſyſtem of their old government, and continued to be ruled by a King: but the inauguration at Xavier,* which had been the ſeat of government and the capital of Whydah, before the conqueſt, was a ceremony that could not be diſpenſed with: for the celebration of which, it was requiſite that permiſſion ſhould firſt be obtained from Ahadee, who derived ſome benefit from the fine which he exacted for his conſent. As a ceſſation of hoſtilities, on ſuch occaſions, was neceſſary, he did not omit to turn ſuch a favourable circumſtance to his own account, whenever there was an opportunity by employing his agents to ſow diviſions among the exiles, and by that means leſſen their power.

To be King of the Whydahs, even in their humbled ſtate, had its temptations. The brother of the rightful heir, upon the death of their father, which happened about 1741, aſpired to that dignity. If Ahadee did not ſuggeſt, he at leaſt encouraged this ſcheme, with a view to divide the Whydahs. He therefore aſſured him of his ſupport; in return for which, the uſurper engaged privately, not only to become his tributary and ally, but alſo to pay him a conſiderable ſum, upon his acceſſion to the government. This wicked young man, relying on Ahadee's protection, whilſt the ceremonies were preparing at Xavier, to inveſt his brother with the regal dignity, had the audacity to murder him there, and the addreſs to be appointed King in his place, cloſing the achievement by devouring the heart of his unfortunate brother: which laſt act of unnatural barbarity was

* The X is pronounced as in Xebeque.

was the proof required by Ahadee, of unlimited devotion to his commands.

Neither the inſtigations to this enormous action, nor the engagements which the uſurper had made with Ahadee, though intended to be kept ſecret, could eſcape the penetration of the Whydahs; they ſuſpected what had paſſed, and ſeveral of them, inſtead of returning from Xavier, to live under ſuch a King, remained in the country, and ſettled under the protection of the Portugueſe fort, at Grigwhee; of which *Seignior John Baſſile*, a gentleman of humane temper, and engaging diſpoſition, was at that time governor. Here theſe people maintaining a correſpondence with their countrymen, and making a favourable report of the governor's behaviour, as well as of their own ſituation, many of the old Whydahs were induced to come and ſettle in that country, to avoid the horrors of a civil war in their own. Five or ſix hundred perſons eſtabliſhed themſelves peaceably in this manner; and if this diſpoſition had been properly encouraged, in all probability a much greater number would have followed their example: but Ahadee, blind to this advantage, or ſwayed by thoſe wretched principles that uſually actuated him, and which had too much tainted his father, without waiting for ſuch a deſirable event, by which he would have gained a large addition of uſeful and valuable ſubjects, cruelly determined to ſeize upon theſe poor people, and ſell them for ſlaves.

To facilitate this baſe deſign, the King invited *Seignior Baſile* to Abomey, on pretence of buſineſs; but indeed to have him in his power. The governor proceeded on his journey, and

being met upon the road by the Agaow, at the head of an army, in full march towards Whydah, he was arreſted by the King's order, and informed, that the only condition of regaining his liberty was to deliver up all thoſe fugitives who had put themſelves under his protection. The governor urged his faith and honour plighted to theſe people, in vain; and further treating the inſtances of the general with contempt, was detained by him as a priſoner. The army continued its march to Grigwhee; and encamped on Gonnegee, a plain between that town and the river; by which poſition he effectually cut off the retreat of the Whydahs to their own country. Here the Agaow, finding the governor was determined not to betray the Whydahs, and willing to make the moſt of him, offered to take a certain quantity of goods, as a ranſom for them: *Seignior Baſile* willingly accepted the propoſal, and the goods were delivered accordingly. Notwithſtanding this, pretences were ſtill found to detain the governor, in order to exact from him more goods, for which a demand was made. To this he alſo conſented, and ſent an order to the fort for their delivery; but a head ſervant of his, a black man, who had charge of the fort, ſeeing that the Agaow was egregiouſly deceiving his maſter, refuſed to ſend any more goods. He likewiſe intimated his ſuſpicions to the Whydahs, who, being of the ſame opinion, and knowing there was no poſſibility of eſcape, reſolved to defend themſelves to the laſt extremity. For this purpoſe they retired into the fort, and got every thing in order for its protection; determined, if overpowered at laſt, to ſell their lives as dear as poſſible. The Agaow remained quiet in his camp, at Gonnegee, for about a fortnight, perhaps waiting for orders, and then came to a reſolution to attack the fort, which was ſurrounded with a wall and

and a deep moat, and mounted about thirty guns. The Agaow's diſadvantage lay in having no artillery; however, early in the morning, on the 1ſt of November, 1741, he led on his troops to the ſtorm, and began his attack on every ſide. Thoſe within the fort were not idle; but with their cannon made a prodigious ſlaughter. The Dahomans, with that bravery which animates them on all occaſions, filled up their ranks with freſh men, as faſt as others fell, and continued the aſſault.

About noon a quantity of gunpowder, in one of the baſtions, took fire, and communicated the flame to the roofs of the buildings, which, being thatched, blazed with great fury. This accident threw the beſieged into great confuſion; which was conſiderably increaſed by the exploſion of the magazine, in the deſtruction of which every ſoul near it was involved. The Dahomans now entered at the embraſures, almoſt without oppoſition, and put every man they met with to the ſword. The governor's faithful ſervant, who had commanded during the defence, ſeeing all was loſt, impelled with rage and deſpair, threw open the gate, and with a keg of gunpowder under his arm, and a lighted match in his hand, ran furiouſly towards the place where the Agaow was; and having got as near to him as he could, with intention to make him a partner in his own unmerited fate, ſet fire to the powder, and heroically blew himſelf to pieces. His ſecond in command was taken alive, and roaſted afterwards before a ſlow fire at Calmina.

In all probability *Seignior Baſile* was now ſet at liberty; for we find that Ahadee afterwards rebuilt the fort for the Portugueſe, and diſavowed the Agaow's proceedings; denying that he

he had given him any orders to act as he had done: but, although he was desirous to throw the odium of this affair upon his general, no one pretended to acquit Ahadee himself from the folly and infamy of the whole plan and transaction.

One successful mischief seemed always to incite Ahadee to another. The Agaow, now about to return from this exploit, received orders from the King, to march towards Jaquin; a country which borders immediately on Whydah, to the eastward. This had been a place of some consequence, where the Dutch had formerly a settlement. It had been conquered by Trudo, and annexed to his dominions; but the inhabitants, taking advantage of the perplexed state of Ahadee's affairs, had neglected, for some time past, to pay the tribute which had been imposed on them, for which he intended to let loose upon them his utmost vengeance.

This country, like that of the Popoes, is surrounded with marshes and swamps, and of difficult access; nor were the Dahomans sufficiently acquainted with the environs, to be able to make an inroad into it. But it happened at this time, that a woman of consequence, belonging to a Jacquin chief, having been guilty of some gallantries, and dreading the punishment of her inconstancy, had made her escape to Dahomy, where, upon a promise of the royal protection, she had engaged to conduct this army through the only path by which Jacquin could be invaded with effect. The Agaow having this woman for his guide, a fit instrument for such a purpose, entered Jacquin unexpectedly. The people, hemmed in by their impassable morasses,

moraſſes, were caught as it were in a trap, whence none could eſcape; and the invaders extirpated the whole nation, leaving not a ſingle inhabitant alive in all the country. *

CHAP. V.

Whydah *invaded.*—Dahomans *routed by the old* Whydahs.—*The forts refuſe to ſubmit.*—Ahadee *relieves them, and vanquiſhes the old* Whydahs.

THE Whydahs, in their iſlands, were too much diſguſted with their new King, to ſuffer him to reign long over them. He had rendered himſelf ſo odious, that he could not even form a party among them to ſupport his pretenſions; and, unable to make Ahadee the payment which had been ſtipulated at his acceſſion, all ſuccours from that quarter were refuſed. He was therefore obliged to relinquiſh that government which he had ſo atrociouſly obtained, and withdrew to Dahomy. Here, after wandering about for ſome time, univerſally deſpiſed, he died miſerably of a leprous diſeaſe, which he had contracted immediately on his return from Xavier; and which the Dahomans attributed to the horrid repaſt he had made there, when he devoured the heart of his own brother.

Ahadee's

* Adahoonzou II. ſent a few families to re-eſtabliſh a ſettlement there, in the year 1777.

Ahadee's conduct, throughout this tranſaction, ſerved only to exaſperate the exiled Whydahs ſtill more againſt him; ſo that hoſtilities were ſoon renewed, with greater fury than ever. In 1743, they enlarged their plan of operations, and ſeemed determined to recover the poſſeſſion of their native country. The Popoes, and all their other friends, concurred in aſſiſting them; and they invaded Whydah with a powerful army. Their deſigns had been no ſecret, but it was out of the King's power to prevent them; for Dahomy being at that time overrun by the Eyeos; the Agaow and the army at a conſiderable diſtance, engaged with the Mahees; and every thing in confuſion; he could not provide for the defence of Whydah, which was thus left with only the few troops uſually eſtabliſhed there, and effectually deprived of further military aſſiſtance. However, the Caukaow, * or general, did every thing that could be expected from a brave and loyal ſoldier; he put his ſmall army in readineſs; the Yavougah, or vice-roy, aſſembled all that were able to bear arms in the town, and joined him; the Xavier Caboceers, and all their vaſſals, increaſed his force, but ſtill his army remained much inferior to that of the enemy: however he was not intimidated; fear never enters into the mind of a Dahoman; cowardice is no part of his compoſition.

Knowing his own heart, and relying on the bravery of his ſoldiers, he marched out againſt the enemy, and met them about a mile to the weſtward of the French fort. The generals of both parties held a diſpaſſionate converſation at the head of their

* The title of the military officer who commands in Whydah.

their troops; in which they declared to each other their reſpective determinations; the one to conquer, the other to defend the country. They drank together, and the Caukaow toaſted health to his King, and ſucceſs to his arms; wiſhing, that "if he ſhould be unſucceſsful on that day, he might not ſur-"vive the diſgrace, but periſh like the glaſs out of which he "drank;" daſhing it, as he ſpoke, in pieces. The battle commenced, and was obſtinately fought: all that rude ſkill, and ferocious courage could effect, was executed on each ſide; till at laſt the brave Caukaow, diſtinguiſhed both as a general and a ſoldier, fell, at the head of his men, after inflicting and receiving innumerable wounds. The reſt of the chieftains were ſtill the foremoſt in danger. Yavougah, and almoſt all the officers of his party, were among the ſlain; and the Xavier Caboceers ſhared the ſame fate. At length the Dahomans, deſtitute of leaders, and overpowered by numbers, were thrown into confuſion, and totally routed.

The enemy, thus maſters of the field, next day pillaged Grigwhee, without oppoſition, and burned it: the inhabitants flying out of the country, and leaving the Whydahs in peaceable poſſeſſion. They then proceeded to the forts, and ſummoned them to ſubmit, or at leaſt to acknowledge the new government; but the governors continued attached to the King, and refuſed to accede to the propoſals offered by his enemies. Mean while the Whydahs, with their families, flocked from their receſſes into the country, in great numbers, and built a town upon Gonnegee, a plain between Grigwhee and the river, juſt beyond annoyance from the guns of the forts. By this means, as well as by the inveſtment of the army, the forts were deprived of every kind of ſuccour, ſo that at the end of three months they began to be

very much in want of proviſions; and, deſpairing of an opportunity of acquainting Ahadee with their ſituation, which they had not once been able to effect during the ſiege, ſo watchful was the enemy, it is probable they would not have continued much longer to decline an accommodation with the Whydahs; when a meſſenger, having eluded the vigilance of the beſiegers, arrived privately from the King, with aſſurances that they might depend upon being ſpeedily relieved, and entreating them to perſevere in his cauſe for a few days longer: of which being aſſured, he returned with the ſame ſecrecy and ſafety.

Ahadee kept his promiſe; rejoiced to find that the forts continued true to his intereſt, he did not doubt of recovering the country. He had employed the interval between the fatal battle and the preſent time in making every proviſion for that purpoſe in his power. He recalled the Agaow and his army out of Mahee; and as the Eyeos were, at this ſeaſon, returned to their own country, he muſtered the reſt of his Dahomans, from all parts, and his forces increaſed to fifty thouſand men. This formidable army, commanded by the Agaow, arrived at Grigwhee ten days after the former meſſenger, and falling ſuddenly on the Whydahs, who did not expect ſuch a viſit, and conſequently were not prepared for it, they defeated, and drove them out of the country; which thus again, as it were in a twinkling, changed its maſter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Rebellion of Tanga. — *Cataſtrophe of his women.* — *His defeat and death.*

THE kingdom of Whydah having been recovered by this fortunate event, Ahadee appointed a perſon named Tanga, to be Yavougah (or vice-roy) over it, in the place of his predeceſſor, who had periſhed with the Caukaow, in the late bloody conflict with the Whydahs. This Caboceer was a man of violent paſſions; vain, proud, and ambitious. He maintained a great number of domeſtics and attendants, whom he attached to his perſon by his liberality, and to his intereſt by protecting them in their villanies, and ſcreening them from juſtice, in defiance of the King. His oppreſſions rendered him odious to the garriſons at the forts; and his great influence and wealth gave no ſmall uneaſineſs to Ahadee; who nevertheleſs did not care to attempt him openly, but waited a fit opportunity to get him into his hands by ſtratagem or ſurpriſe.

Whilſt he, on the one hand, was waiting to accompliſh this purpoſe, Tanga, on the other, was meditating nothing leſs than the acquiſition of the kingdom of Whydah for himſelf. This daring project was not juſtified by even a plauſible motive. For, having been an eunuch from his infancy, he had no children to inherit the royal dignity; the poſt which he already poſſeſſed

was a very honourable one; and his opulence ſo conſiderable, that it amply afforded him the gratification of every deſire, except that of inſatiable ambition. His plan was, to gain poſſeſſion of the Engliſh fort, and then to declare himſelf king. He rightly conſidered that the command of any one of the forts would have been a conſiderable aſſiſtance to his deſign; but he preferred this, from an opinion which prevails in the country, that it is impregnable.

The ſpot on which *William's Fort* * ſtands, was formerly dedicated to religious purpoſes; and from the frequent exerciſe of the ſacred ceremonies in that place, the deities, which were formerly worſhipped there, are ſuppoſed ſtill to protect it; nay, ſo ſtrongly are the natives impreſſed with this opinion, that the governors, in compliance with their intreaties, have permitted a houſe within the walls of the fort to be appropriated to *Nabbakou*, the titular god of the place.

It has hitherto been ſo fortunate as to eſcape thoſe calamities which the other forts have experienced: a circumſtance the more extraordinary, as the Whydah King took ſhelter there, when he fled from Xavier, at the time of the Dahoman invaſion of his kingdom, and found protection in it, until there was an opportunity of conveying him in ſafety out of the country. Though this action might naturally have provoked the vengeance of the Dahomans, they, however, did not appear to reſent it; yet they plundered the French fort at that time, and afterwards that which belonged to the Portugueſe, as we have already

* The Engliſh caſtle in Whydah is ſo called.

already related; but as the Engliſh fort had eſcaped this and every ſimilar diſaſter, it ſtood high in the opinion of the natives: Tanga therefore deemed the acquiſition of it of greater importance to his deſigns, than of all the others.

When the Yavougah's ſcheme was ripe for execution, he attempted to ſurprize William's Fort, in Auguſt, 1745, in the following manner. Under pretence of making a public viſit to the forts, he gave directions that a certain number of his men ſhould be ready to attend him: for, when the vice-roy viſits the governors, it is cuſtomary for him to be accompanied by two or three hundred men, under arms; beſides the muſicians, flag-bearers, umbrella-carriers, and ſeveral employed immediately about his perſon; amounting perhaps to one hundred more.

Upon the preſent occaſion Tanga ſelected all theſe out of his beſt men, chooſing thoſe whom he could rely on, and knew to be devoted to his will; not doubting, if he could, without ſuſpicion, introduce theſe into the fort as uſual, he ſhould eaſily make himſelf maſter of it. Before he departed from his own houſe, he ſupplied his men with ammunition, and ordered them to load their muſkets: an order which appeared ſtrange to thoſe who were not appriſed of his ſecret intentions. The Engliſh linguiſt, who was accidentally preſent, ſtruck with this circumſtance, ſlipped away privately, and acquainted Mr. *Gregory*, the Engliſh governor, with what he had ſeen. Mr. Gregory's ſuſpicions were raiſed by the information; and he made a proper uſe of it, by providing for the ſecurity of his fort, whilſt Tanga was paying a viſit to the French governor.

He

He ordered his guns to be loaded, and the gate ſhut, before the vice-roy arrived; and when he came, refuſed to admit him into the fort, unleſs he diſmiſſed his retinue. Tanga refuſed to comply; and proteſted againſt ſuch an exception, as an unprecedented indignity, to which it became him not to ſubmit. He threatened, and ſoothed alternately, but to no purpoſe; the governor would not recede from his determination; and Tanga, finding it impracticable to introduce his ruffians, returned home, extremely chagrined at the diſappointment.

Apprehending, from the governor's unuſual precaution, that his deſigns were diſcovered, he began to fortify his houſe. Ahadee, on receiving intelligence of what had paſſed, declared him a traitor, and ſet a price upon his head. Some troops were ſent to attack him, which he engaged and defeated; more ſuccours arriving, they beſieged him in his houſe, from whence he made frequent ſallies, and ſome times with ſucceſs; but his ſtrength diminiſhed daily by the loſs of men in theſe ſkirmiſhes, and he ſaw no proſpect of extricating himſelf.

In this dilemma he conſulted his prieſts, who, having performed their ſuperſtitious rites, informed him, "That his "ſafety alone depended upon his getting into the Engliſh fort." This was no eaſy matter to effect; for he was cloſely beſieged by the King's troops, and upon bad terms with the Engliſh governor, who, beſides abhorring his rebellion, had not forgiven an inſult which he received from him ſome months before: for being in company with the other governors, on their way to Abomey, to complain to the King of his vice-roy's oppreſſive conduct; Tanga, appriſed of their intentions, met them on the road at Ardra; ſeized them, and having kept them

them for ſome days priſoners in the ſtable among his horſes, brought them back with him to Whydah, ſufficiently humbled, and debarred from all acceſs to the King.

Under theſe circumſtances the only refuge pointed out to him by the prieſts, and which they had probably adviſed for this reaſon, ſeemed almoſt unattainable: but his affairs were deſperate, and ſomething muſt be attempted. He harangued his adherents, intreated their aſſiſtance, and diſtributed his treaſures among them. His ſilks, his coral, his gold, were laviſhed without reſerve, to animate them on this emergency. His wives, for, though an eunuch, he had a ſeraglio of ſome hundreds, joined their perſuaſions; and his people, at length worked up to an attachment and reſolution worthy of a better occaſion, refuſed to ſacrifice him to their own ſafety, which they might have obtained by delivering him up. They determined to force their way through the King's troops, conduct their maſter to the Engliſh fort, and there recommend him to the governor's mercy.

This reſolution being adopted, the women, dreading a reverſe of fortune, and deſpairing to meet again with ſo indulgent a lord, put each other to death: the oldeſt firſt ſlaughtering the young ones, and then cutting their own throats. After which melancholy ſcene the houſe was ſet on fire, to deſtroy the remaining effects, and prevent their falling into the King's hands. Tanga and his party, taking ſuch of the treaſure as was moſt portable, ſallied forth, and made good their paſſage through the King's troops; directing their courſe to the Engliſh caſtle, though it was firing upon them all the time they approached.

approached. Tanga finding this, endeavoured to retreat into the garden; but, as he entered it, received a ſhot which put an end at once to his ambition and his life.

Originally, and during his youth, a captive and a ſlave, he had had the addreſs to recommend himſelf to Ahadee's friendſhip, who raiſed him to the higheſt rank; but his inſolence, which was inſupportable, and his ingratitude to his benefactor, proved how unworthy he was of the favours he had received. When he fell, his adherents immediately diſperſed: ſome eſcaped out of the country; but the greater part of them were taken, and ſuffered as they deſerved.

The affection of Tanga's wives, which impelled them in this deſperate criſis of his affairs to devote themſelves to death, may perhaps appear romantic, if not incredible. To explain this, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that Tanga did not guard his women with that jealous eye, nor ſubject them to ſuch ſtrict confinement as is uſual in that part of the world. The ſeraglio was only a neceſſary appendage to the pomp and ſplendor of his rank; and out of this reſervoir he generouſly ſupplied all his ſervants with wives. Such unprecedented bounty conciliated the ſincereſt regard of theſe people. Every young man within his juriſdiction was ambitious of ſerving Tanga. To his wives he appeared, not the rigid jailer, nor the tyrannic uſurper of their affections, but the generous arbiter of their livelieſt pleaſures. Hence they could not but be charmed with a freedom which no other ſeraglio enjoyed; and would not ſurvive that felicity and protection which was to terminate with the exiſtence of their maſter and of their lovers, whoſe ruin ſeemed inevitable.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Shampo *becomes the object of* Ahadee*'s jealouſy.—Warned of his danger by his ſiſter, he flies.—The* Agaow*'s diſgrace and death.*

TANGA and his followers were not unworthy of the fate they met with; and if Ahadee had reſtricted his vengeance to thoſe who really deſerved it, his character would have been leſs exceptionable. Few real occaſions offered to excite his diſpleaſure; ſo general was the diſpoſition among his people to ſubmit implicitly to his will, and to applaud all his actions. But through the whole tenor of his reign, every man's ſafety was precarious, in proportion to his merit, or wealth: not content with being univerſal heir to their effects, and appropriating to himſelf every thing his ſubjects died poſſeſſed of; the innocent inhabitants of whole villages were ſold for ſlaves, to raiſe ſupplies for his extravagance. And although thoſe grievances were repeated at his pleaſure, ſuch was their ſubmiſſion and attachment, that none preſumed to complain. Unreaſonable ſuſpicions occupied his breaſt; ſo that they who ſerved him with ſolicitous fidelity, and became eminent by their exploits, and ſucceſs, frequently became the objects of his envy and horror.

Among the number of theſe was Shampo, who had ſignalized himſelf on many occaſions, and held a conſiderable poſt in

the army. He was the darling of the ſoldiers, and every tongue was buſy in his praiſe. Such merit could not fail to excite a tyrant's jealouſy, and Ahadee from that moment determined to cut him off. Shampo had a ſiſter in the King's houſe, who, by ſome means, got intimation of the King's deſign. To have an interview with her brother was impoſſible, for the King's women are forbidden to hold diſcourſe with any man; but as ſhe was at liberty to ſend proviſions for his table, from the royal manſion, ſhe concealed a knife and a cord with a nooſe on the end of it, among the victuals: from which expreſſive alluſion, her brother was at no loſs to comprehend that he was doomed to ſuffer, either by the cord, or by the ſabre. He ſaved himſelf by a precipitate flight, and carried a conſiderable part of the army along with him into the Popo country, where he was received in a manner ſuitable to his merit. The Popoes promoted him to the command of their army, which poſt he enjoyed to the day of his death, in 1767, bearing to the laſt an implacable enmity againſt the ungrateful Ahadee.

His general, who had ſerved him zealouſly, and executed his orders with great ſucceſs, being leſs fortunate, fell a victim to his cruelty. This was the ſame Agaow, who had bravely ſtormed the Portugueſe fort, recovered Whydah, and taken Boagry; who had in ſome meaſure reſtored the declining glory of the country; and who once ſtood ſo high in the eſtimation of his King, that, after beſtowing many favours upon him, deſirous to let the world ſee how much he honoured his merit, he gave him a formal leave to build *a houſe two ſtories high*: which favour, however, the general modeſtly declined.

Where

Where the inhabitants are in ſuch abject ſlavery, that they muſt not ſit upon a chair, becauſe it is an indulgence reſerved for white people, and a few of the caboceers, who enjoy this high privilege by eſpecial grace and favour from the King; where none may preſume, on pain of certain death, to have a door of boards for his houſe, to defend him from the weather; nor to make it decent, by whitewaſhing the interior part: in ſuch a country, to have permiſſion to build a convenient houſe, is a mark of extraordinary diſtinction.*

But the Agaow did not continue long to enjoy his maſter's ſmiles: he was ſeized and brought before the King, who accuſed him of an intention to withdraw from the kingdom, and follow the evil example of Shampo, by flying into the country of the Mahees as he had done to Popo. Nothing could be more unjuſt than this ſuſpicion. The Agaow, reſenting it with a becoming dignity and firmneſs, replied to this effect: "I have manifeſted my zeal on various occaſions, for "your ſervice, and thought no march fatiguing, no battle "hazardous, whilſt executing your will; my actions, ſo often "crowned with ſucceſs, have added affluence and honour to your "kingdom: what part of my conduct has expoſed me to this "accuſation? You have, as pledges of the fidelity of your ſlave, "my aged mother, my wives, and my children, in your hands. "Where, or to whom in preference ſhould I go? I have con-"ducted your armies, and ſpread deſtruction through all the "nations around us; is it probable I ſhould throw myſelf into

* Except leave to wear ſandals, this was the higheſt public mark of favour the King could ſhew.

" the arms of thoſe who tremble at my name? Of thoſe, whoſe " country I have laid waſte, and led the inhabitants captive, in " triumph to your gate?" The King deſired him to acknowledge himſelf guilty, and truſt to his royal clemency. The Agaow refuſed to atteſt a falſhood, and was ordered to immediate execution. The perſon whoſe buſineſs it was to perform this horrid duty, though hackneyed in deeds of death, was too much ſhocked on this occaſion to acquit himſelf with propriety. The ſcimitar failed, in his hand, to perform the office of beheading; it only mangled the unhappy victim. He was ſent back to priſon, and there ſtrangled.*

CHAP. VIII.

Fatal expedition of the Dahomans, againſt the Whydahs *and* Popoes. — *The confederates invade* Whydah, *and are totally vanquiſhed by the* Dahomans, *aſſiſted by the* Engliſh.—*Peace concluded.*

THE Whydahs, aſſiſted by the Popoes, and directed by the ſagacious advice of Shampo, became more formidable than ever. They viſited the Whydah beach, and gave frequent interruptions

* The family of this brave man were afterwards ſo much reduced, that his eldeſt ſon was glad to find employment as a ſervant in Mr. Norris's factory.

terruptions to trade. In diſputing the poſſeſſion of this beach, the Dahomans were often very roughly handled, and as often returned unſucceſsful. They had loſt numbers of their men in theſe ſkirmiſhes, when their prieſts at laſt diſcovered, that their oracles had forbidden them to attack the enemy on the beach, but had ordered that they ſhould wait in readineſs, between Grigwhee and the river; and that the party which ſhould firſt croſs the river, and begin the attack, ſhould infallibly be routed. This was no unwelcome diſcovery, becauſe it afforded a *ſalvo* for their honour, and an apology for ſubmitting to inſults, which they were too weak to reſent.

Ahadee at laſt took the reſolution of making a powerful effort, to prevent the further incurſions of this troubleſome people; and in 1753, ſome time after the reduction of Boagry, when a kind of truce with the Mahees afforded him ſome leiſure, he ſent a numerous army againſt them. The Dahomans were now provided with ſome canoes; which, with others that they ſeized, belonging to the enemy, enabled them to penetrate into the Popo country: but this was a mode of warfare which they did not underſtand.

Shampo, who commanded the confederate Whydahs and Popoes, by pretending to fly, encouraged the Dahomans to advance. By degrees they were bewildered among ſwamps, rivers, and marſhes; in a wretched country, where proviſions began to fail them. However, they puſhed boldly forward, hoping to bring the enemy to an engagement; but Shampo outwitted them, and by the dexterity of his manœuvres, drew them on to that narrow ſlip of barren ſand, which reaches nearly

nearly from Volta to Benin, * where he effectually cut off their retreat. The Popoes, now unmolested, employed themselves, from their canoes, in firing at the entrapped Dahomans, at their pleasure; but the greater part perished by disease or famine. The dead were so numerous, say the Popoes, who perhaps may exaggerate, that the fish of the river, assisted by the beasts, and birds of prey, not being able to eat them all, their putrid carcasses corrupted the air, and occasioned a pestilence in the country. The whole Dahoman army perished upon this occasion, except twenty-four, whom Shampo sent back, to acquaint their King with the the fate of their companions. These, when they had told their sad tale, Ahadee ordered to immediate execution: bidding them go express to the shades, to inform their comrades how much he disapproved of their conduct in the war!

The next affair of any consequence that occurred was in 1763, when the old Whydahs and Popoes, in their turn, again invaded Whydah. Shampo himself being too old and infirm to take the field, his son Affurrey commanded the confederate army, which being joined by the flower of the Popo chiefs, marched into the country of Whydah, without opposition: for old Honnou, who was then Yavougah, or vice-roy, would not venture far out to risk a battle; but remained in Grigwhee with his men, to defend the town, which the Popoes were preparing to attack, before he offered to oppose them. Honnou was wounded and carried off the field early in the fight; upon which

* This sand, which is from half a mile to three miles in breadth, lies between the sea and a river, which runs nearly parallel to the beach, for about two hundred miles.

which the command devolved on his ſecond, called Baddely, who made a gallant defence; but being preſſed by the ſuperior force of the enemy, he retreated with his men towards the French fort, in expectation of being protected by their guns; in which, however, he was diſappointed: for, though the King's honour, and the ſafety of the country, were at ſtake; though the enemy had begun to ſet the ſuburbs on fire; the fort fired nothing but powder at them.

This neutrality of the French, if it deſerves the name, though it might be politic, was certainly not very grateful; for however exceptionable the King's treatment of his own people might be, the whites had nothing to reproach him with, in his conduct towards them; to whom he had ever been reſpectful, and generous to a degree of profuſion. In all diſputes between them and his ſubjects, if they had but the colour of juſtice on their ſide, he determined in their favour; and the complaiſance, civility, and reſpect, with which they had been univerſally received in his dominions, were greatly owing to his own conſpicuous example.

The Popoes, animated by the conduct of the French, advanced boldly. Baddely and his men were obliged to fly before the enemy, who thought they had nothing more to fear, and were preparing to burn the vice-roy's quarters: little expecting the vigorous oppoſition they were about to meet with from the Engliſh fort, where Mr. Goodſon was prepared to give them a very warm reception.

The Britiſh cannon, loaden with muſket balls, and grape-ſhot, made a prodigious havock among them, and threw them into

into the utmoſt confuſion: they were ſtopt in their career; and it was ſome time before they had preſence of mind, to ſeek their ſafety by flight.

The enemy upon this occaſion had taken the Dahomans at a diſadvantage; for the vice-roy, who did not expect the Popoes, had for that day, as it was ſeed time, permitted half his people to go to their plantations, which they had done early in the morning. Theſe luckily returning, at the moment that the enemy had approached the Engliſh fort, Baddely rallied his forces, attacked the confederates, and gained a complete victory. Of thirty-two general officers, diſtinguiſhed by the large umbrellas which were carried over them, thirty were killed on the ſpot. Affurrey, Shampo's ſon, eſcaped from the field; but, overwhelmed with grief and ſhame, ſat down beneath a tree, and ſhot himſelf. Only one officer ſurvived, to reconduct the ſhattered remains of the Whydah army to Popo. The King of Dahomy had diſpatched the Agaow, with an army, to the relief of Grigwhee; but he did not arrive till the day after the battle: and Mr. *Goodſon*, as the King afterwards acknowledged, had the ſole merit of the victory.

The Dahomans, now weakened by a long ſeries of unprofitable wars, were unable to follow up their victory, but contented themſelves with driving the enemy out of the country; and the Popoes and Whydahs, having loſt the flower of their men and generals in the late engagement, attempted nothing of moment after this action: though hoſtilities were continued on a ſmaller ſcale for ſeveral years; during which the confederates confined themſelves merely to plundering parties, and occaſional viſits to Whydah beach, where the effects

effects of the white traders on landing or embarking ſometimes fell into their hands. But in 1772, a peace was happily concluded, under the mediation of *Lionel Abſon*, Eſq. governor of William's Fort, to the mutual advantage of both parties; who, after forty years of war, now enjoy the profits of undiſturbed commerce and ſocial intercourſe. This able governor beſtows ſo much attention to preſerve tranquillity, and conducts himſelf ſo circumſpectly towards both parties, by whom he is equally reſpected, and conſidered as an impartial umpire, that, whilſt he remains in that poſt, a firm peace will probably continue.

Ahadee, worn out with years and infirmities, engaged in nothing worth relating after this tranſaction. He died at about 70 years of age, on the 17th of May, 1774. He was in perſon rather tall; graceful in his manners; and very polite to ſtrangers: though the ſcourge and terror of his own ſubjects. He was ſucceeded by Adahoonzou II. whoſe life we ſhall next enter on, after having ſhewn what fell under our immediate obſervation, in a journey made to the Court of Ahadee, in 1772.

A JOURNEY

TO THE COURT OF

BOSSA AHADEE,

KING OF DAHOMY,

In the Year 1772.

By *ROBERT NORRIS.*

MY buſineſs requiring an interview with the King, I applied to the viceroy for the neceſſary attendants to Abomey, and was furniſhed by him with a linguiſt, ſix hammock men, ten porters, and a captain of the gang, who was reſponſible for the conduct of the reſt: my own ſervants, and a few others, attending on the captain, who were armed, made up our number thirty.

The

The porters, having received their ſeveral loads, which conſiſted of a mattreſs, a ſmall trunk of wearing apparel, ſome proviſions and liquors for myſelf, a caſe or two of ſpirits for the men, ſome bags of cowries for defraying our expences, and a few pieces of ſilk for preſents, I got into my hammock, and commenced my journey at ſix in the morning of February 1, 1772.

In paſſing by the market-place of *Grigwhee*, I found a great number of people collected there; and obſerving ſome large umbrellas among them, I concluded that the vice-roy and his caboceers were of the party. Surprized at this early aſſembly, I ſent a ſervant to inquire the occaſion of it; but before he could return, a meſſenger from the vice-roy, who had diſcovered my approach, accoſted me from his maſter, requeſting to ſpeak to me before my departure. I found him paſſing ſentence of death on a criminal, a middle-aged woman, who was on her knees before him, in the midſt of a circle formed by his attendants. I requeſted her life might be ſpared; and, from the circumſtance of his having ſent for me, flattered myſelf that my offer to purchaſe her for a ſlave would be accepted: but I was diſappointed. He told me the King himſelf had conſidered the offence, and decreed the ſentence; which was, "that her head "ſhould be cut off, and fixed upon a ſtake" that was lying by her, and which ſhe had been compelled to bring with her from Abomey, for that purpoſe.

During this converſation a little girl, prompted by curioſity, and ignorant of what was doing, made her way through the crowd; and diſcovering her mother, ran to her with joy, to congratulate her on her return. The poor woman, after a

ſhort embrace, ſaid, " Go away, child, this is no place for " you," and ſhe was immediately conveyed away. The vice-roy proceeded in his ſentence, which the poor wretch heard with ſeeming indifference, picking her teeth with a ſtraw which ſhe had taken from the ground. When the vice-roy concluded his charge to the ſpectators, of obedience, ſubmiſſion, and orderly behaviour, which the King required from all his people, the delinquent received a blow on the back of her head with a bludgeon, from one of the executioners, which levelled her to the ground; when another, with a cutlaſs, ſevered it from her body. The head was then fixed on a pole, in the market place, and the body immediately carried to the outſide of the town, and left there to be devoured by the wild beaſts.

The perſon executed, who had kept one of the little ſhops in the market, having diſcovered, a few days before, that ſome trifle had been ſtolen from her, had taken from the fire a lighted ſtick, which whilſt ſhe waved round her head, (an uſual cuſtom in that country) ſhe expreſſed a wiſh that the perſon who had taken her property, and did not reſtore it, might die, and be extinguiſhed like that ſtick. In going through this ceremony a ſpark had fallen on the dry thatch of one of the huts, and ſet the market on fire.

After a delay of half an hour on this diſagreeable occaſion, I reſumed my journey. The face of the country, though flat, is extremely agreeable; it is moſtly open; and a conſiderable portion of it is cultivated, and interſperſed with clumps and groves of lofty and luxuriant trees. In an hour and an half we approached the town of *Xavier*, which is environed with plantations

plantations of yams, potatoes, callavances, and corn; for which there is a ready market at Grigwhee.

Before the Dahoman conqueſt in 1727, when Whydah was an independent kingdom, this was the reſidence of the kings of Whydah; and the Engliſh, French, Dutch, and Portugueſe had forts or factories here, on which thoſe at Grigwhee were dependant: but they were deſtroyed on that event, and the guns removed by the conqueror, Guadja Trudo, to his palaces at Ardra, Calmina, and Abomey. No veſtiges of them now remain, but the moats which ſurrounded them; nor can the ſite of the palace of the Whydah Kings be aſcertained, but by the trench which encompaſſed it. The place is now overgrown with lofty trees, and is held ſacred by the repreſentatives of that unfortunate family, who live in exile with the remains of their countrymen, in the vicinity of Popo. And the new King of Whydah, on his acceſſion to the government of his few and needy vaſſals, muſt come to this ſpot to be inaugurated.

All writers who have deſcribed this country, extol its natural beauties, and the fertility of its ſoil. Previous to the conqueſt it is ſaid to have been ſo extremely populous that land was claimed as private property; and this being the great mart of trade to a very extenſive tract of the interior country, the inhabitants are ſaid to have abounded in riches. An anecdote which I have heard of the laſt King of Whydah, from the old people of the country, confirms, in ſome degree, this aſſertion.

When Captain, afterwards Sir Chaloner, Ogle, was ſent in 1722, in the *Swallow* man of war, to the coaſt of Africa, in queſt

queſt of *Roberts*, the pirate, he landed at Whydah, and acquainted the King with the purpoſe of his errand. The King told him, " if he ſhould ſecure that raſcal Roberts, who had " long infeſted his coaſt, he would give him the weight of " That in gold duſt," pointing to an iron half-hundred weight that lay near him. Capt. Ogle fell in with and took Roberts's ſhip, the *Royal Fortune*, at Cape Lopez. Roberts was killed in the engagement, and the pirates were tried and condemned at Cape Coaſt, where all of them were executed, except half a dozen, who were carried to Whydah, and hanged there. The King duly diſcharged his promiſe to the Captain, giving him in this way between three and four thouſand pounds for his bravery: which was no ſmall mark either of his riches or punctuality.

We made no halt at Xavier, the hammock men chooſing to jog on at their uſual rate of about five miles per hour; relieving each other occaſionally. From thence to *Toree* took up two hours. It is but a ſmall town; and, being a convenient ſtage, the inhabitants derive ſome advantage from ſupplying travellers with refreſhment. It is ſeparated from the province of Whydah by a pretty deep and rapid river, whoſe banks are covered with ſtately trees, and a great deal of cloſe underwood, which afford a commodious ſhelter to elephants, of which there are plenty hereabouts.

When the Dahomans under Trudo were about to croſs this river, which was formerly the northern boundary of the Whydah kingdom, the infatuated inhabitants, inſtead of diſputing the paſſage, or riſking a battle in defence of their country, were contented to place, with great ceremony, the fetiſh ſnake in the path, to oppoſe the invading army; which not anſwering their

their hopes and expectations, they deemed all other reſiſtance vain, and fled precipitately before the conquerors. We croſſed the river over a tolerably good bridge, formed by wooden piles placed at proper diſtances, and covered with faggots and hurdles.

Here we overtook our porters; and the hammock men being diſpoſed to take a little reſt and refreſhment, I intended to amuſe myſelf with ſtrolling through the town, and viewing it. I purpoſed to do this alone, but found myſelf followed by my captain. On telling him I did not then require his attendance, and that he might remain with his companions; he replied, that "the Torees were a ſtrange ſort of people, and had bad "cuſtoms; and, as he had to anſwer with his head for my "ſafety, he would not truſt me alone among a people who "made a practice of eating men." Though I was pretty certain his fears for me were unneceſſary, yet, to make him eaſy, I returned to my party, reflecting on the prejudices which people, reſiding at not more than twenty miles diſtance, entertained of their neighbours.

When the hammock men had reſted a little, and taken a a ſlight repaſt, we reſumed our journey, and proceeded to a ſmall town, called *Azoway*, which we reached in a couple of hours, the road being very good, though we ſaw no ſettlements or plantations between the two places. As the country was covered with thick woods, and the graſs grew luxuriantly, higher than our heads, which prevented a free circulation of air, I found the heat, now that the ſun had gained its meridian, ſo extremely fatiguing, that when we reached Azoway, I readily conſented to the hammock men's propoſal, of having my hammock

hammock ſuſpended under the ſhade of a ſpreading tree, whilſt they went to bathe in an adjoining river: which done, and they having thereby refreſhed themſelves exceedingly, we proceeded with freſh ſpirits for Ardra, which we reached in two hours.

Ardra, * or *Alladah*, is pleaſantly ſituated on a gently riſing eminence of gravelly ſoil. A prodigious number of palm trees grow in the neighbourhood of it, which add greatly to the beauty of the proſpect, and ſupply the inhabitants with great quantities of the oil, which they bring to market at Whydah, in large callebaſhes that contain from five to ten or twelve gallons each. The King and ſeveral of his great men have houſes here; but they ſeldom viſit them.

I was conducted to apartments in a houſe belonging to one of the King's officers, which are appropriated to the accommodation of white men on their journey; and was preſented, by the man who had the care of it, with a jar of cool water, and a pot of the country beer, called *pitto:* which favour I acknowledged, by returning a flaſk of brandy.

Here we reſolved to ſtop for the day; and my retinue, having depoſited their baggage in my apartment, and ſuſpended the cotton hammock in which I travelled, with the mattreſs in it, for my night's lodging, went to the quarters provided for them, and left me to recover, in ſilence and retirement, from the fatigues of the day; nor was I interrupted by any impertinent curioſity

* This is not the capital of the former kingdom of Ardra, but a Dahoman town called by the ſame name. Vide ante, p. 6.

curiosity of the town's-people during the remainder of it, but passed the night without even a bolt to the door, in the most perfect security. My sleep, however, was greatly interrupted by the incessant howling, roaring, and barking of wild beasts, particularly the jackals, called by the natives *tweetwees*, which, as if they had been its regular police, continued prowling through the town during the whole night, and disturbing us with their execrable cries. They are fierce, voracious animals, about the size of a large mastiff dog, but much stronger in all their parts, particularly the jaws, teeth and legs. Their feet are very large, and armed with formidable claws. They quit their retreats in the woods soon after dark, and range in troops through the towns and plantations, in quest of food. Any domestic animal that is not secured in a house, or at least within high walls, is sure to become their prey; nothing comes amiss to them; when they cannot get better fare, they eat any kind of trash: I have frequently seen the stomachs of those that have been killed, full of pieces of broken callebashes that had once contained oil, and of old cow-hides that had been used for covering the rolls of Portuguese tobacco. They are the greatest devourers of the carcases of those who are executed as criminals, or sacrificed at the public festivals.

They readily discover dead bodies that are interred, and drag them out of their graves. This is a joint operation of several; and when they have got their prey before them, they dance and caper round it, with great exultation and howling, for some time, before they devour it. When any of them singly falls in with a prize, he changes the horrid roaring which he used in the pursuit, to another vile note, which is to summon his companions to come, and partake with him: and it is by

the ſame note that they announce the diſcovery of a human grave, and collect a party to explore its contents. I never knew an inſtance where they attacked a cow, that they did not ſeize the udder firſt; and in Whydah, where they are very numerous, I have often known cows reſcued from them, with the loſs of that part, by the exertions of the people, when they have run immediately to the place where the piteous bellowings of the poor animal directed them. I am ſurprized that Monſ. *Buffon* ſhould omit to mention, that though this animal has a ſtrong reſemblance in figure to the wolf and canine ſpecies, it differs from them in a ſtriking feature, by having only two teats, which are placed one on each ſide of the breaſt, like a monkey. *

Early on the next morning, February 2d, we continued our journey acroſs a very agreeable country, and having paſſed through two villages, ſtopped at a town called *Havee*, and breakfaſted: it is but an inconſiderable place, though the King has a houſe in it. Our ſtay here was no longer than neceſſary, and we proceeded to *Whybow*; which place I reached about ten o'clock, and was kindly received by the hoſpitable old Caboceer, who provided an excellent dinner for me, and gave my whole retinue abundant proof of his liberality, by ſupplying them plentifully with good cheer. This old man's name was Jabrakou; he had been a warrior in his youth, and having acquitted himſelf with reputation, was rewarded with the government of this town. I found him a keen ſportſman: he did

* Mirifica pudendorum conformatio extat. A fœmina, mas haud facile dignoſci poteſt. Latitant penis ac teſtes intus, ſubter cutem hypogaſtricam. Per foramen effluit urina; penisque in coitu detruditur. Tantam autem rima labiis muliebribus profert ſimilitudinem, ut, ſpecie prima, valde ambiguum ſexus eſtimetur, et quaſi *Hermaphroditicum*.

did not like domeſtic animals, he ſaid, but the chace furniſhed him with a variety of delicacies: and he ſhewed me his larder, which was well ſtored with buffalo, veniſon of different ſizes and ſorts, wild hog, and *Agouti*, or *Buſh-Cat*. Of all theſe he preſſed me to partake for my journey, which though I declined as having no occaſion for them; yet, on coming away, he inſiſted on my accepting a couple of nice Guinea fowls, which he ſaid he had ordered to be roaſted for my ſupper. It was with much difficulty I prevailed upon him to accept a ſmall preſent in return; which he refuſed to do, until I promiſed to ſpend a few days with him on a hunting party, at my return.

I recollect Monſ. Buffon ſays, the Agouti is peculiar to the new world, and is found no where but in America; yet they abound in this part of Africa, are gregarious animals, and are eſteemed a great dainty by the natives. The Buſh-cat, by which name it is diſtinguiſhed by the Britiſh traders at this coaſt, approaches nearly, in the length of its body, to that of a full grown hare, and is rather thicker. The body, when diveſted of its ſkin, appears incaſed with fat, like a hog. The tail is ſhort, and not buſhy. I do not remember the number of its claws; but the feet are ſmall, and do not ſeem formed for burrowing in the earth. The hinder legs are longer than the fore ones, and the ears are rounded and ſhort. The lads who ſeized and brought them to me for ſale, related that the practice was to wait for theſe animals in their haunts, morning and evening; that they were generally ſeen in companies, or probably families of fifteen or twenty, following one another in the ſame path. The head-moſt were ſuffered to paſs on unmoleſted, and then an aſſault was made upon the rear

of the party with ſticks; by this manœuvre, two or three were uſually taken priſoners. On my aſking the reaſon why they did not make their firſt attack upon the leaders? they replied, that in ſuch a caſe the aſſailants would be expoſed to the fury of all that followed, and that their bite was extremely ſevere; which I was induced to believe, as they are furniſhed with two very formidable inciſory teeth in the upper jaw. By beginning with the rear, they told me there was little danger; becauſe, thoſe which were already paſſed, continued to march on, without diſturbing themſelves about the fate of their companions. The muzzle of the *Buſh-cat*, except the upper lip, which is divided like a hare's, is not very unlike that of a rat; the upper jaw projecting conſiderably beyond the lower. Inſtead of ſoft hair, this animal is covered with harſh, coarſe, ſtiff briſtles, which adhere ſo little to the ſkin, as to be ſeparated by a ſlight touch. This creature is endued with a power of erecting its briſtles, which are of a browniſh colour, clouded with dark ſpots. It is on the authority of the Braſilian Portugueſe captains, who trade to Whydah, that I ſuppoſe this animal to be the Agouti; for they aſſure me, that it is not at all different from thoſe which are ſo common in Braſil; and the French captains, who had been at Cayenne, concur in the ſame opinion. The African Agouti is very fat, and its fleſh taſtes greaſy and ſtrong, unleſs it has been cured by ſmoak; which is a preparation that makes it exceedingly palatable. *

Having

* *Piſo* (*Hiſt. Nat. lib.* 3.) enumerates five ſpecies of the Lepus in Braſil; of which the Agouti is the third. In the circumſtances particularly of its bulk and ſpots, the Buſh-cat of Whydah ſeems to have a nearer reſemblance to the Paca, which ſtands foremoſt in his claſſification. The American Agouti is rather a ſmaller animal; has ſhort round ears; its hinder feet are armed with ſix

Having ſtaid with this friendly old man until evening, I ſet off for *Appoy*, which is an hour and a half's journey; and lodged there, in a houſe provided, by the king's order, for the accommodation of white people. I was now come to the diſagreeable and fatiguing part of the journey, and judged ſome reſt neceſſary, previous to entering upon it. Here the *great wood* commences, through which, the path is ſo narrow, crooked,

ſix claws, and its anterior with only four: when it is eating, it holds the food between its fore paws, and ſits erect on its haunches. It produces ſeventeen young ones at a litter, thrice in the year. In *Pere Labat's Voyage aux Iſles de l'Amerique*, is a bad figure of it; but his deſcription is very correct. He ſpeaks of three ſpecies obſerved in the Caribbee iſlands. Peter Martyr allots the ſame number to the iſland of St. Domingo: they were the common food of the Indians, who called them the *Uti*, or *Outi*, which ſcarcely differs from the continental name, *Acouti*.

That it is common to Africa and America, is a curious fact. Are we to ſuppoſe, that there once exiſted an actual junction of the two continents? Or, that an intercourſe of navigation prevailed between them in remote ages, prior to any hiſtory or tradition that has reached us? To the former ſuppoſition it will be objected, that the elephant, and other quadrupeds of Africa, have never, (as far as we are informed) been ſeen in America, either by the Indian Aborigines, or by the firſt European diſcoverers; and that America, in its turn, poſſeſſes ſome not yet known to exiſt in Africa, as the *Tamandua*, &c. Navigators, indeed, might tranſport from one country to the other, a breed of the ſmaller eſculent quadrupeds, as the Agouti, for example. This is a ſubject upon which a great deal of various conjecture may be hazarded; but of which nothing can now with certainty be known.

Father Labat, who was an admirer of good cheer, to ſhew he was not uninſtructed in the art of cookery, gives us a receipt for the beſt manner of dreſſing this animal. He tells us, that, "firſt of all, it is to be ſcalded with milk, like a "pig; and, when intended for the ſpit, great care muſt be taken to fill its "paunch with a rich ſtuffing, compoſed of the harſlet, mixed with yolks of "eggs, ſweet herbs, and ſpicery. I have eaten it, (ſays he), many a time, "dreſſed according to this, and other faſhions, and always found it an excel-"lent diſh, and of eaſy digeſtion." Tom. III. fol. 25.

crooked, and bad, that it is impaſſable to be carried in a hammock, even at the preſent, which is the beſt and drieſt ſeaſon of the year: during the rains, it is almoſt impaſſable.

We entered the wood at three o'clock in the morning, February 3d, with the advantage of a bright moon and ſerene ſky. The captain of the guard diſpoſed his men, ſome in front, ſome in rear, with loaded muſkets, to defend us from the attacks of wild beaſts, with which this dreary wood abounds; on each ſide of me, two of the hammock men carried lanterns with lighted candles in them, on which the natives have great reliance for terrifying the beaſts of prey: the whole party ſinging, and ſhouting as loud as they could bellow; blowing their trumpets, and firing muſkets occaſionally; which, with the chattering of monkeys, alarmed at our approach, the ſqualling of parrots, the roaring of wild beaſts, and the craſhing and ruſtling of elephants through the underwood, formed the moſt horrid diſcord that can be conceived.

After a fatiguing march of five hours, we reached *Agrimee*, a ſmall town on the oppoſite ſide of the wood; where we halted ſome time, to breakfaſt; and then reſumed our journey to Calmina, which we reached in two hours. *Calmina* is a large town, and may contain about fifteen thouſand inhabitants. The King frequently reſides here, and has a ſpacious houſe, which occupies, with its appendages, almoſt as much ground as *St. James's Park:* it is encloſed with a high mud wall, which forms nearly a ſquare. On a former viſit, I meaſured one ſide of it, and found it *one thouſand ſeven hundred* paces

paces long*; in the centre is a gateway, and large guard-houſe, on the roof of which, are expoſed, a great number of ſkulls of priſoners taken in war.

At Calmina, I was introduced into apartments in the May-hou's houſe, where I met a meſſenger from him, with compliments to congratulate me on my ſafe arrival; and deſiring to be informed, what time I propoſed to enter Abomey, and whether I would conſent to be received *in ſtate*, by the great officers of the court? a ceremony which conſiſts of the prime miniſter, and other head men, meeting the viſitor about half a mile from town, on horſeback; with numerous attendants, under arms, who perform their military exerciſe, and fire a few rounds of muſketry. After which, the great men alight, and receive the ſtranger under the ſhade of large umbrellas; preſent him firſt with a tumbler of cool water, and afterwards with a ſmall glaſs of ſpirits, which is drank to the king's health; and then the whole body accompany him into the town.

I declined this honour, as agreeing but badly with my preſent fatigue: and having diſmiſſed the meſſenger, charged with compliments, on my part, to his maſter; I remained there till evening. In the interim, an old lady of the houſe provided me with an excellent dinner; which came very ſeaſonably, as the porters, with my proviſions, did not arrive in time, owing to their fatigue in croſſing the wood.

I left Calmina, at five in the evening, and proſecuted my journey for Abomey, which I reached in two hours. The intermediate

* From the ſtature of Mr. Norris, this is nearly as many yards, or about an Engliſh mile. J. F.

mediate country is cleared of trees; and the road, which is an excellent one, lying high, affords a pleasing prospect of the country. I found it in high cultivation; chiefly of corn and callivances, for the supply of the adjoining towns. Half way between Calmina and Abomey, is a country house of the King's, called Dawhee, which was the ancient residence of his family, and the capital of their little territory, before they emerged from their original obscurity.

On my arrival at the gate of Abomey, I was saluted with fifteen guns, and conducted to the white men's apartments in the Mayhou's house; whose steward waited on me, with a present from his master, of a jar of cool water, a pot of *pitto*, and some fowls. This officer soon made his appearance, accompanied by the Yavougah, or vice-roy of Wydah, and presented the King's compliments, on my safe arrival, and escape from accidents or sickness on the journey. This politeness was followed by a present from the King, of a sheep, some fowls, two jars of *pitto*, two baskets of corn-flour, a callebash of palm oil, one of salt, and a flask of brandy.

Having had occasion to mention the Mayhou, it may be necessary to explain his office, and that of a few others, who will be introduced in the sequel. The prime minister is called the Tamegan: he is the first civil officer of the state, and ranks immediately after the King; he is the *only* person in his dominions whose head the King may not take off at his pleasure: it is the Tamegan's duty to assist the King with his advice, and to aid him in the cares of government; and upon the decease of the King, he and the Mayhou have the power of appointing which of his sons is to succeed him. The next

in

in rank is ſtyled the *Mayhou*; he is alſo a counſellor of the king, and acts as maſter of the ceremonies; he directs, or ſuperintends the public feſtivals of the court; and has the care of all ſtrangers that viſit Dahomy, whether Europeans, Moors, or Negro ambaſſadors, from neighbouring ſtates. The Tamegan and he, are judges in criminal caſes; and one or other of them are almoſt conſtantly with the king, informing him of every circumſtance that paſſes. The *Agaow* is commander in chief of the army. The *Yavougah* is vice-roy of *Whydah*; the literal tranſlation of his title is, "*Captain of the white men**." The *Jabou* is maſter of the horſe; he has the care of criminals, and is to ſee their puniſhments inflicted; he has alſo the ſuperintendance of the plantations, which ſupply the king's houſhold with proviſions; and is to ſee that the *women who are to cultivate them* are not remiſs in the diſcharge of their duty. Theſe are the principal perſonages of the kingdom; to which offices they have no hereditary claim; being appointed to them by the king's particular favour, ariſing from the opinion he entertains of their qualifications ann abilities.

The court was engaged at this time in the celebration of a grand feſtival, which continues ſeveral weeks, and is called "*the annual cuſtoms*;" when the king waters the graves of his anceſtors with the blood of many human victims. The governors of the forts at Whydah are expected to attend, and make a preſent on the occaſion; which ſhould conſiſt of at leaſt one piece of Indian damaſk, or ſome other handſome ſilk. The vice-roy of Whydah, and the governors of the different towns and provinces, muſt be there with their preſents alſo; and give

* *Yavou*, white man---*gah*, Captain. A. D.

an account of their conduct, and of every circumstance which the king wishes to be informed of. They who acquit themselves to his satisfaction, have the honour to receive some mark of his approbation; which is generally a large cotton cloth, manufactured in the *Eyeo* country, of excellent workmanship, which they afterwards wear for an upper garment. The black merchants, or trading men, and indeed every head of a family, must also attend for a few days, and bring a quantity of *cowries*, proportioned to their circumstances. Each of them endeavours to make his present, which is in fact a *tax*, as respectable as he can; and would be reprimanded, or perhaps punished, if he did not do so. They are all attended by their domestics; and the young fellows among them, who are desirous of having female companions, bring, each, the savings of their industry, if it amount to five *cabess*, or twenty thousand *cowries*, which they lay before the king's gate; and prostrating themselves in the dust, beg to be favoured with wives; which is generally complied with. The females are handed out from the palace, and distributed among the petitioners, and the *cowries* received in return. Each must take the female that is assigned him: be she old or young, handsome or deformed, he is obliged to receive her. Sometimes I have known the king's wives, who are the agents in this business, hand out, in malicious sport, the man's mother to him; whom he must maintain afterwards, and wait, content, till his circumstances enable him to try his luck on some future occasion.

The state principles from which this mode of supplying wives is derived are, that "parents have no sort of property in "their children in the Dahoman territories:" they "belong "entirely to the king," are taken from their mothers at an early

early age, and diſtributed in villages remote from the places of their nativity; where they remain ſubject to his future approbation of them, with but little chance of their being ever ſeen, or at leaſt recognized by their parents, afterwards. The motive for this is, that there may be no family connections, or combinations; no aſſociations, that might be injurious to the king's unlimited power. Hence, each individual is detached, and unconnected; and having no relative for whom he is intereſted, is ſolicitous only for his own ſafety; which he conſults, by the moſt abject ſubmiſſion and obedience. Here, paternal affections, and filial love, ſcarcely exiſt. Mothers, inſtead of cheriſhing, endeavour to ſuppreſs thoſe attachments for their offspring, which they know will be violated, as ſoon as their children are able to undergo the fatigue of being removed from them.

On the annual return of the *Cuſtoms*, at which all muſt attend, unleſs prevented by ſickneſs, every perſon being immediately in the king's power; they who have been guilty of any delinquency, are apprehended without any trouble, and inquiry into ſmall offences is frequently deferred to that time; but, on a ſuſpicion of crimes that merit immediate inveſtigation, ſuch as imprudent familiarity with the king's women, witchcraft, or theft, the offender is viſited by certain meſſengers, called *half-heads* *, who bring the criminal before the magiſtrate of the town; and if the offence be proved, they either carry his head with them, in a bag, to ſhew the king that

 ſentence,

* From having one half of their heads ſhaved, and the hair permitted to grow to its full length on the other; which, with half a dozen ſtrings of human teeth that reach from the right ſhoulder acroſs the breaſt and back to the oppoſite knee, gives them a ſtrange appearance. R. N.

ſentence has been executed, or conduct him to the capital, to receive his puniſhment there.

At this time too the king informs himſelf, particularly, of the behaviour of each of his ſlaves: the meaneſt of whom has acceſs to him upon this occaſion, and, if injured, has an opportunity of applying perſonally, and in private, for redreſs: which is a check on the conduct of thoſe in power, and, no doubt, prevents them from oppreſſing their inferiors. There are indeed but few inſtances of perſonal injuries in this country; for as they are *all* ſlaves to the king, thoſe who enjoy any pre-eminence are cautious how they abuſe their fellow ſlaves, leſt they incur the diſpleaſure of their common maſter; and from this terror, in quarrels between equals, they content themſelves with expreſſing their indignation in mutual invective; and rarely proceed to blows, leſt a *king's ſlave* ſhould be hurt, which would be of ſerious conſequences to the aggreſſor.

I was ſuffered to remain uninterrupted in my apartments the day after my arrival, to recover from the fatigue of the journey; except that, towards evening, an old man begged leave to come in; and, approaching with great reſpect, produced a ſmall calabaſh, containing a few pebbles, which he turned out upon the floor, and counting them deliberately over, ſhewed me there were fifteen of them, which I recollected was the *number of guns* that were fired on the preceding evening; and finding that he was the gunner, I paid him his perquiſite of an * *ackey of cowries*, and a flaſk of brandy, and deſired him to ſhew me his artillery; to which he readily agreed, and conducted me to an open ſpace in the

* One thouſand, value 2s. 6d. A. D.

the town, where I found twenty-two two pounders, and two ſixes, without any carriages; not arranged for defence, but lying on logs of wood, to be fired occaſionally for ſalutes, and on public rejoicings.

The town is large, and may contain about *twenty-four thouſand* inhabitants. It is built without any order, or the leaſt regard paid to the regularity of the ſtreets. A number of ſmall huts for the women, and a ſhady piazza or two for the maſter, the whole incloſed with a high *mud wall*, form the accommodations of each family. It is ſituated upon a dry gravelly plain, and is ſupplied with water from a rivulet near two miles off, which makes that article dear: a number of women being employed in carrying it round the town, in earthen pots, to ſell. The town is ſurrounded by a wide and deep ditch §, but has no breaſt-work; nor does it appear how they have diſpoſed of the clay that has been dug out of it, unleſs it has been expended in conſtructing the mud walls of their houſes. There are, in different places, four wooden bridges acroſs this ditch, and a guard-houſe at each, in which ſome ſoldiers are ſtationed.

The King has two houſes, called *Dahomy* and *Gringomy*, in the town; and another without the gates, called *Dampogey*; they are about the ſame dimenſions as that at Calmina; and, like it, are incloſed by a mud wall, about twenty feet high. In paſſing the guard-houſe, at the door of Gringomy palace, I obſerved a great number of human ſkulls, fixed on ſmall ſtakes on the roof of it, which had belonged to priſoners taken

§ It is ſo deep, that the loſty trees planted in its bottom reach very little above the ſurface. Capt. Fayrer. J. F.

taken in war. On each ſide of the door was a pile of human heads, at leaſt fifty in each; and at a few yards diſtance, oppoſite to the door, was a ſmall ſtage, about ten feet high, on which lay about two dozen heads of unfortunate victims, who had been ſacrificed a few days before, at ſome of the late feſtivals.

On my return, I received a meſſage from the King, who deſired to ſee me next morning, in Dahomy-houſe. I prepared accordingly for my viſit, by unpacking a very handſome ſedan chair, and a chamber organ, which I had previouſly ſent up from Whydah. Theſe I conveyed early in the morning by my porters to the palace, and followed them, at ten o'clock, February 5, accompanied by my linguiſt. I was received at the door by the Mayhou. On each ſide of it was a human head, recently cut off, lying on a flat ſtone, with the face down, and the bloody end of the neck towards the entrance. In the guard-houſe were about forty women, armed with a muſket and cutlaſs each; and twenty eunuchs, with bright iron rods in their hands; one of whom ſlipped away, to announce my arrival. The Mayhou, walking cautiouſly forward, conducted me through the firſt court to a door, near which were two more heads, where he proſtrated himſelf, and kiſſed the ground; on which it was opened by a female, and we entered a ſecond court, two ſides of which were formed by long ſhady piazzas. In this we were met by the Tamegan and Yavougah, who, with the Mayhou, frequently knelt down, and kiſſed the ground, pronouncing aloud ſome of the King's titles, as we walked acroſs this court, in which were ranged ſix human heads. From this we paſſed through a third door into the court, where the King waited for us. He was ſeated on a handſome chair of crimſon velvet, ornamented with gold fringe, and placed on a carpet, in a ſpacious

cious cool piazza. which occupied one ſide of the court. He was ſmoaking tobacco, and had on a gold-laced hat, with a plume of oſtrich feathers. He wore a rich crimſon damaſk robe, wrapped looſely round him; yellow ſlippers, but no ſtockings. Several women were employed fanning him; and others, with whiſks, to chace away the flies. One woman, on her knees before him, held a gold cup for him to ſpit in.

When the door which led into this court was opened, the Tamegan and his two companions immediately fell down, rubbed their foreheads in the duſt, kiſſed the ground repeatedly, and approached the King, crawling on their hands and knees, proſtrating themſelves frequently, and throwing the duſt plentifully, with both hands, upon their heads: had it been mud from preceding rain, the ſame ceremony would have been performed.

Having bowed to the King, I was directed to a chair a few yards from him; and having drunk his health in a ſmall glaſs of brandy, and he mine, he inquired after the health of his brother, King George of England; and aſked ſome queſtions reſpecting my voyage. We converſed, through the medium of my ſervant, who acted as interpreter; and of the Mayhou, who firſt kiſſed the ground, before he preſumed to repeat the King's words to my ſervant: a cuſtom always obſerved in every part of the country, as well as in the royal preſence, when a perſon has occaſion to repeat the king's words, or deliver any meſſage or order of his. After ſome converſation, he deſired me to let him hear the organ, and appeared much pleaſed with the tunes. I then explained the uſe of the ſedan chair; which I repreſented as much more convenient than the hammock, which he generally

generally uſed. Half a dozen of his hammock men were then introduced, crawling on their hands and knees; and, by his deſire, I went into the ſedan, and, directing them what to do, was carried by them all in turns, until they appeared to be pretty expert at their buſineſs. He then went into it himſelf, and was carried repeatedly round the court, amidſt the ſhouts and acclamations of his miniſters, his women, and his hammock men. It was a ſmart ſhowy thing, covered with red morocco leather, and lined with white ſilk. He was aſtoniſhingly delighted with it, and diverted himſelf with opening and drawing the curtains, which he deemed a moſt ingenious contrivance. At laſt, in the exultation of his ſoul, ſome of the eunuchs were called in to ſupply the place of the hammock men; and the door leading from the piazza to his private apartments being opened, he was carried by them to diſplay his finery among his women. On which I had permiſſion to depart, and his nobles retired in the ſame abject manner which they obſerved in approaching him. In the evening, I purchaſed thirty-two ſlaves, which finiſhed the buſineſs of the day.

On the next morning (February 6) I had an invitation to come, if it were agreeable, and be a ſpectator of ſome amuſements at the king's gate, at Gringomy, which I accepted, as I underſtood that the Agaow, or general, had returned, in the preceding night, from an expedition againſt the Mahees, and had brought ſome priſoners, which I wiſhed to enquire about. I found the Tamegan, Mayhou, Yavougah, Agaow, and Jahou, ſeated on ſtools, placed on leopards ſkins, at the king's gate, and ſheltered under large umbrellas from the ſun. An accommodation of the ſame ſort was provided for me. A great concourſe of people was aſſembled; but I found it was not a time

or

or place for buſineſs, ſo entertained myſelf with the droll diſtortions, and antic dances of a multitude of people, to the harſh muſic of a variety of inſtruments. Amidſt all this feſtivity, ſhould a man's foot ſlip, and occaſion him to fall, it is regarded as a bad omen, and the poor wretch is immediately taken out of the crowd, and his head ſtruck off, without any interruption to the dance, which goes on, as if nothing had happened.

To theſe ſucceeded a troop of about two hundred and fifty females, whoſe motions and grimaces were ſtill more comic, if poſſible, than what had preceded. This band was compoſed of ladies of pleaſure, ordered to be ſuch by royal authority. This is a precaution taken by government to prevent the peace of private families being violated, and is perhaps more neceſſary here than in any other ſtate, as adultery is ſeverely puniſhed, and every indiſcretion of gallantry expoſes the delinquents to death, or ſlavery: eſpecially too, as the people of rank engroſs the major part of the women.

The King's ſeraglio conſiſts of between three and four thouſand. His principal men have from one hundred to three or four hundred wives each; and people in humbler ſtations, from half a dozen to twenty. From this unequal diſtribution, in which the rights of mankind are infringed, and their wants egregiouſly miſcalculated, the lower claſs remain unprovided with female companions: but in every town there is a certain number of women, proportioned to its ſize, who are to be obliging to every cuſtomer that offers. The price of their favours is regulated, and very moderate; and though theſe poor creatures pay a heavy tax annually, which was the occaſion of their being convened at preſent, yet by brewing ſmall beer,

and breeding poultry for ſale, added to what their occupation brings in, they are enabled to live: and I am inclined to think there are wretches in the world, of the ſame profeſſion, more miſerable than theſe.

Whatever entertainment this ſcene might have afforded, it was damped by my ſervant's officiouſneſs, in pointing out ſeven men, with their ankles and wriſts ſecured round tall poſts, fixed in the ground, where they were to remain till the night preceding the next feſtival, when their heads were to be ſtruck off. Theſe unhappy victims, though conſcious of their impending fate, were not indifferent to the muſic, which they ſeemed to enjoy, by endeavouring to beat time to it. An equal number of horſes were likewiſe faſtened to ſtakes, on the oppoſite ſide, and were to ſuffer the ſame fate.* I ſoon took my leave, and quitted this ſcene of diſtreſs; but had not proceeded far, before I was almoſt ſuffocated by an inſupportable ſtench, which, upon looking round, I found to proceed from the heads of thirty-two horſes and thirty-ſix men, who had been maſſacred on two preceding feſtivals, not for any crime of theirs, but as a ſacrifice to the miſtaken grandeur of the king, and agreeable to cuſtom immemorial.

Directing my courſe from thence towards the market-place, I found at the entrance of it two gibbets, about twenty feet high,

* It is an ancient cuſtom amongſt ſavage nations to offer up all kinds of animals taken in war. The Hermunduri, in a war with the Catti, after it was over, made one general ſacrifice of men, horſes, &c. "*Victores diverſam aciem Marti ac "Mercurio ſacravére, quo voto equi, viri, cuncta victa occidioni dantur.*" Taciti Annalium Lib. 13, in fine. J. F.

Plate III.

high, with a murdered man hanging naked by the ankles to each; and at the other end of the market, two other gibbets, furniſhed in the ſame manner. Theſe poor wretches had been put to death by blows of heavy clubs on the head, and had their privities cut cloſe off, that the delicacy of the King's women, who had to march under them, in proceſſion, on a feſtival, about eight days before, might not be offended. The birds of prey were tearing out their bowels, and devouring them piece-meal; which the natives looked at without the leaſt emotion; only admiring the grandeur of the King, who could defray the expence of ſuch exhibitions. I obſerved in the market, that the fleſh of dogs was expoſed for ſale here, as well as at Whydah, in common with that of other animals.

February 7th. Early this morning I went to the gate of Dahomy houſe, to ſee a proceſſion of the King's women, who came out, in number about ſeven hundred, neatly dreſſed, and danced in the parade before the guard-houſe, where a number of men under arms were drawn up at a diſtance, to prevent the populace from approaching them. Upon their retiring, the Agaow advanced with about five thouſand men under arms, who went through the various evolutions of their exerciſe; and concluded with a general dance, and ſome war-ſongs. After which, I went in to pay my reſpects to the King, and by his deſire played over the tunes on the chamber-organ. It had three barrels, which made it rather too complicated a buſineſs for him. It played ſeveral agreeable tunes, and ſome ſelect marches; but he preferred the *hundred and fourth* pſalm; and I fixed the barrel to that, at his requeſt, for his future amuſement.

February 8th. This morning I received a meſſage from the King, to wait on him at Dahomy houſe; which I did, and found him ſitting in a piazza, dreſſed in a ſilk night-gown. Having bowed to him, I was directed to a chair, where ſome ſlaves were ready to hold a large umbrella over me. The King was attended by his great officers of ſtate, and the parade crowded with a multitude of the populace. At a little diſtance from me ſat a dozen ſwarthy men, with turbans on their heads, and cloathed with cotton ſhirts, made like ſurplices, long looſe drawers or trowſers of the ſame, and morocco leather ſlippers. Theſe people are called here Malays; they ſpeak and write Arabic; and are ſuppoſed to come from the northern part of Africa, from the confines of morocco, and the ſtates of Barbary. They travel to this, and other parts of Africa, more remote; for they viſit Angola, apparently from motives of trade; and yet I could not diſcover that they purſued any branch of it, that was of importance enough to be an object. They buy hides, and ſkins, which they tan and work into horſe-furniture, tobacco pouches, and other uſeful articles; and carry ſome bales of ſkins back with them. Whatever be the real motives of their journey, they behave with propriety, and are courteouſly received, and much reſpected wherever they come. They profeſs the Mahometan religion; and when their long lent of Ramadan is over, the King annually kills an elephant to feaſt them. *

Soon

* Theſe Malays, or Mullahs, are noticed by Snelgrave, who, on his viſit at the camp of Guadja Trudo, the former king of Dahomy, obſerved two of them, and was informed that they belonged to a far inland nation, bordering on the Moors, and, together with thirty-eight others of their countrymen, had been taken priſoners at different times, whilſt they were trading from one country

Soon after I was ſeated, the muſic, which, beſides trumpets, flutes, and bells, conſiſted principally of a multitude of drums, of various ſizes, began to play, and a numerous crowd danced to this rough harmony. When one band was tired, they were relieved by another, and theſe by two more. After ſome time, tables were ſpread with abundance of good victuals, at one of which I dined, as did alſo the Mallays at another. Adahoonzou, the King's eldeſt ſon, and heir apparent, who knew me on former viſits here, ſquatted down behind my chair, and condeſcended to receive a roaſted fowl, and ſome other things, which I handed to him from my table. But the King never eats in public; it is even criminal to ſuppoſe he ever eats at all; or that he is ſo much like other mortals, as to want the refreſhment of ſleep. When the repaſt was over, the muſic was renewed; and the King

country to another. They were in fact itinerant Arabs, poſſibly mongrels, expert in writing Arabic, and in the art of dying with a variety of colours, goat and ſheep ſkins, which they manufactured into cartouch-boxes, bags for holding gunpowder, and trappings for horſes. By theſe valuable talents they had ſo far attracted the admiration and eſteem of their conqueror, that he treated them with extraordinary marks of favour. The title of Mullahs, or Mollahs, which properly belongs to an order of Mahometan prieſts, whoſe office it is to ſupervife and controul the Cadis, may poſſibly be aſſumed to give themſelves a greater air of dignity; and it is not improbable, but that under the unſuſpected appearance of traders, they may be ſecretly employed as miſſionaries, to make known and ſpread the doctrines of the Koran among theſe interior black nations. If the negroes ſhould ever be diſpoſed to lay aſide their own hereditary ſuperſtitions, it is hardly a doubt but they will embrace Mahometiſm in preference to any other religious ſyſtem, becauſe it allows polygamy, flatters their prejudices in many other reſpects, and will induce a conformity of faith and manners with their northern and north-eaſtern neighbours. But as yet, they do not ſeem, in general, inclined to adopt a change. The remnant of the Whydahs, who had eſcaped the edge of Guadja Trudo's ſword, were abundantly thankful to him, for permitting them to continue in the enjoyment of their *ſnake-worſhip*.

King advanced into the parade, followed by a guard of twenty-four women, armed each with a blunderbuſs, where he danced for ſome time, to convince his ſubjects of his health and activity: to their inexpreſſible joy and ſatisfaction, which they manifeſted in the loudeſt acclamations. He then teſtified his approbation of the performance of his muſicians, by rewarding them with eighty *ounces* * of cowries, which were brought in by three hundred and twenty of his wives, each carrying a *cabeſs*, or four thouſand of them, in a braſs pan, which they diſtributed to the drummers, who departed, highly ſatisfied; and I alſo took my leave, and withdrew.

February 8. On my arrival this morning at Gringomy-houſe, I found a vaſt concourſe of people aſſembled. I was received by the Mayhou, who conducted me into a ſpacious parade; on each ſide of the entrance were three human heads, that had been cut off the night before; and in the centre was erected a lofty tent, or large umbrella, ſhaped like a ſugar-loaf, about fifty feet high, and forty feet wide; it was open below, and reſted on a circular range of ſmall iron rails, through which the king could have a view of what paſſed in the parade. He ſoon made his appearance, and ſeated himſelf, amidſt the ſhouts and acclamations, of the people under his tent, on an elegant armed chair, covered with crimſon velvet, and ornamented with carving and gilding. I was placed under the ſhade of a large umbrella,

* An ounce here means an ounce *value*, of which there are two ſorts: the ounce of *gold*, worth four pounds ſterling; and the ounce *trade*, of only half that value, which is the quantity alluded to. Now, this being given in cowries, the weight of each ounce is about forty-two pounds avoirdupoiſe, and the whole quantity about a ton and a half weight. See the following Table. J. F.



umbrella, the Mallays on my right, and on my left about thirty eunuchs, with each a bright iron rod in his hand, and dreſſed like women. After the muſic had played about half an hour, with the confuſed noiſe of which, and the ſhouts and ſongs of the multitude, I was almoſt ſtunned; a droll harlequin entered, who entertained the King with an odd ſort of dance, and fired occaſionally a blunderbuſs, with five barrels, which gave the King ſo much ſatisfaction, that he ſent him five cabeſs of cowries, or fifty ſhillings. *

The proceſſion then began, with a guard of an hundred and twenty men, carrying blunderbuſſes, who marched out two a-breaſt; next, fifteen of the King's daughters, fine comely women, in the prime of life, attended by fifty female ſlaves; after them marched, in regular order, one by one, ſeven hundred and thirty of his wives, bearing proviſions and liquors for an entertainment in the market-place; theſe were followed by a guard of ninety women under arms, with drums beating. A table was then laid, and I breakfaſted, whilſt the proceſſion continued. Six troops advanced, each conſiſting of ſeventy women,

* A complete table of the Dahoman monics, numbers, and weights, collected from the ſeveral authors.

				s. d.		*lb. oz. tenths.*
40 cowries	1 tocky, or ſtring	No.	40	value 0 $1\frac{1}{5}$	weight	0 1 7
5 tockys	1 galhina		200	0 6		0 8 4
5 galhinas	1 ackey		1000	2 6		2 10 0
4 ackeys	1 cabeſs		4000	10 0		10 8 0
4 cabeſs	1 ounce, *trade*		16000	40 0		42 0 0

Now from this ounce, weighing on experiment about 45lb. troy, or 42lb. avoirdupoiſe, the weights in the laſt column are determined. J. F.

women, with a diſtinguiſhed favourite walking under an umbrella at its head. She who led the van was held by the King and her attendants as too ſacred to be ſeen; ſo that they ſecured her effectually from my ſight with the umbrella, and certain long targets of leather, covered with red and blue taffeta, with which they encompaſſed her. In the laſt troop were two umbrellas, and four favourites, very fine women, who were ſaid to be in higher eſteem with the King than any, except the lady before mentioned. All theſe entertained the King with their ſongs and dances as they paſſed; and the favourites went into the tent to pay their reſpects, and received conſiderable preſents of cowries from him.

The women were ſucceeded by ten bands of his younger children, fifteen in each, from about ſeven to fifteen years old, each band conſiſting of thoſe that were nearly of the ſame age and ſize. Seven troops of fifty women each followed next, each troop preceded by two Engliſh flags: theſe, like the former, amuſed his Majeſty with their ſongs and droll dances. Four of them particularly engaged my attention; their dreſs was too extravagant to be deſcribed; each had a long tail fixed to her rump, which ſeemed to be a ſlip of leopard's ſkin, ſewed up and ſtuffed, which, by a dexterous wriggle of her hips, ſhe whirled round like a ſling, with ſurpriſing velocity: theſe likewiſe had a ſhare of their maſter's bounty, and marched off loaded with cowries. Beſides theſe, there were fifty or ſixty women employed about the King's perſon, going on meſſages, and diſtributing preſents, which he dealt about him with a liberal hand.

When

When the women had marched out, the eunuchs began their ſongs in the King's praiſe; enumerating his titles, and proclaiming his grandeur and actions, in terms of the moſt fulſome adulation, which continued until the women had made the neceſſary preparations for him in the market-place. Then the King retired, and the proceſſion began in the following order: Firſt, two coaches, drawn by twelve men each; next, the ſedan chair; then three hammocks, ſcreened from the ſun by large ſumptuous umbrellas of gold and ſilver tiſſue, and covered with canopies of the ſame; each of theſe was ſurrounded by a very ſtrong guard, and the King was in one of them, but whether in coach, chair, or hammock, would have been preſumptuous, even criminal, for any of the attendants to venture to gueſs. My hammock followed, and then five other hammocks, belonging to the great officers of the ſtate, accompanied by an immenſe crowd of attendants and ſpectators.

We then proceeded in this manner to *Ajawhee* market, directly under five gibbets, with a man hanging on each, as deſcribed before, who had been murdered in the preceding night for that purpoſe. We then entered a large parade, incloſed with different kinds of cloth, extended on rails, to keep off the populace: adjoining one end of it was a higher incloſure of finer cloth for the King. None came into the large parade but the Tamegan, Mahou, Yavougah, Agaow, Jahou, and their attendants, except myſelf and ſervants: and here I ſat down to to a dinner, which would have ſerved an hundred more. After I had dined, the Tamegan and the other officers attacked the remainder; and the crowd without were ſo well ſupplied with victuals and brandy, that every one of them was fully ſatisfied.

In the evening I had permiſſion to viſit the King; and having paſſed half an hour with him, returned to my quarters, ſufficiently tired with the noiſe and fatigue of the day. On my way, I paſſed by the place where I had ſeen the ſeven men, and the like number of horſes, tied two days before. They were now gone; and, I was told, had been murdered on the preceding night: but that none of them were thoſe upon the gibbet, nor thoſe whoſe heads were in the king's houſe.

Nothing material occurred on the three enſuing days, which I employed in purchaſing ſome ſlaves and ivory; but on the 12th I was ſummoned again to court, to attend another feſtival. Only four human heads were placed at the king's door upon this occaſion. The dances and the proceſſion were nearly the ſame as before, except that the dreſſes and ornaments of the women were much more ſhowy. The variety and abundance of rich ſilks, ſilver bracelets, and other ornaments, coral, and a profuſion of other valuable beads, exceeded my expectation. Beſides, there was added another troop of forty women, with ſilver helmets; and there was a diſplay of the King's furniture and trinkets; moſt of the women carrying ſomething or other of his; ſome of them, fine ſwords; others, ſilver-mounted guns; above a hundred of them held either gold or ſilver-headed canes in their hands; and that none might be unprovided, ſome carried candleſticks, and others lamps, perhaps fifty at leaſt of each, with many other articles, which were all held up for the gaping multitude to admire. We dined, as before, in the market-place; and in the evening, when I went to wait on the King, a female dwarf was introduced to dance before him; in which ſhe acquitted herſelf very well: ſhe

ſeemed

ſeemed to be about thirty years old, and meaſured only two feet ſeven inches high; was without any deformity, and tolerably well ſhaped.

During this day's amuſements, we were viſited by an *Harmattan*, which, if deſcribed ſcientifically, would furniſh a curious chapter in the hiſtory of winds. Leaving that taſk to thoſe who are more equal to it, I ſhall only endeavour to give ſome idea of its moſt ſtriking *phænomena*.

On that part of the coaſt of Africa which extends from Cape Verd to Cape Lopez, there are, in the months of December, January, and February, frequent returns of a wind, from the north-eaſt, which is known by the name of the *Harmattan* wind. It probably may be felt further to the ſouthward than Cape Lopez, but I cannot ſpeak of what occurs in countries which I have not viſited. It comes on indiſcriminately at any hour of the day or night, at any time of the tide, or at any period of the moon's age, and continues a day or two, ſometimes five or ſix; once I knew it to continue a fortnight; and there are generally three or four returns of it every ſeaſon. It never rains during an Harmattan; but it ſometimes immediately ſucceeds a ſhower. It blows with moderate force; not quite ſo ſtrong as the ſea-breeze, which in the fair or dry ſeaſon ſets from the weſt, weſt-ſouth-weſt, and ſouth-weſt; but ſomething ſtronger than the land-wind, which blows at night from the north, and north-north-weſt.

This wind is always accompanied with an unuſual gloominеſs, and hazineſs of the atmoſphere. Very few ſtars can be ſeen through the fog; and the ſun, concealed the greateſt part

of the day, appears only for a few hours about noon, and then of a mild red, exciting no painful ſenſation in the eye. No dew is perceived during the continuance of this wind; nor is there the leaſt appearance of any moiſture in the atmoſphere. Salt of Tartar, diſſolved in water, ſo as to run upon a tile, and expoſed to the Harmattan, even in the night, becomes perfectly dry again in a few hours. Vegetables of every kind ſuffer conſiderably from it; all tender plants, and ſeeds juſt ſprouting above the earth, are killed by it; the moſt flouriſhing evergreens feel its baneful influence; the branches of the lemon, orange, and lime trees, droop; the leaves become flaccid, and wither, and their fruits, robbed of their uſual nouriſhment, are cramped in their growth; and ripen, or rather appear yellow and become dry, before they have arrived at half their uſual ſize. Every thing appears dull and faded. The graſs withers, and dries like hay; of which circumſtance the natives avail themſelves, to burn it down in the vicinity of the roads; as well to keep them open, as to deſtroy the ſhelter which it affords to wild beaſts, or even to enemies that might lurk concealed in it. The covers of books, ſhut up cloſely in a trunk, and protected by lying among clothes, bend back as if they had been expoſed to a fire; the pannels of doors, window-ſhutters, &c. ſplit, and the joints of a well-laid floor, of ſeaſoned wood, will gape ſo wide, that one may lay his finger in them; the ſides and decks of ſhips become quite open and leaky; and veneered work flies to pieces, from the contraction of the wood in different directions: if caſks containing liquor, as wine, or ſpirits, be not frequently wetted on the outſide, they generally loſe their contents.

The

The air becomes conſiderably cooler in an Harmattan; and the thermometer (Fahrenheit's) is generally ten or twelve degrees below the common ſtandard. The *natives* complain much of the ſeverity of the weather on theſe occaſions, and clothe themſelves in their warmeſt apparel, to guard againſt it; and though that alteration is highly grateful to the Europeans reſident in the country, yet *they* alſo feel many inconveniencies, in common with the Blacks: for the eyes, noſtrils, lips, and palate, becoming diſagreeably dry and uneaſy, there is a neceſſity and inclination to drink often, not ſo much to quench thirſt, as to remove a painful aridity in the fauces. The lips and noſe become chapped and ſore; and though the air is cool, there is a diſagreeable ſenſation of prickling heat upon the ſkin, as it had been waſhed with ſpirits of hartſhorn or ſtrong lye. If this wind continue five or ſix days, the ſcarf ſkin generally peels off from the hands and face; and from the reſt of the body, if the Harmattan continues a few days longer. Perſpiration is conſiderably ſuppreſſed; but when ſweat is excited by exerciſe, I have found it peculiarly acrid; taſting like ſpirits of hartshorn diluted with water.

So far its effects on the animal and vegetable world are very diſagreeable; but it is alſo productive of ſome good. This ſtate of the air is extremely conducive to health; it contributes ſurpriſingly to the cure of old ulcers and cutaneous eruptions; perſons labouring under fluxes and intermitting fevers, generally recover in an Harmattan; and they who have been weakened and relaxed by fevers, and ſinking under evacuations for the cure of them, particularly bleeding, which is often injudiciouſly repeated, have their lives ſaved, in ſpite of the doctor. It ſtops

ſtops the progreſs of epidemic diſeaſes; the ſmall-pox, fluxes, and remittent fevers not only diſappear, but they who are labouring under theſe diſorders when an Harmattan comes on, are almoſt ſure of a ſpeedy recovery. Infection is not then eaſily communicated. In the year 1770, I had above three hundred ſlaves on board a ſhip in Whydah Road, when the ſmall-pox appeared among them: the greater part of theſe were inoculated before an Harmatan came on; and about ſeventy of them underwent that operation a few days after it ſet in. The former got very well through the diſorder; none of the latter had either any ſickneſs or eruption. We thought we had got clear of the diſorder; but in a very few weeks it began to appear among theſe ſeventy; about fifty of them were inoculated the *ſecond* time; the others had it in the natural way. An Harmattan came on, and they *all* recovered, except one girl, who had a malignant ulcer on the inoculated ſpot, and died ſome time afterwards of a locked jaw. Theſe ſalutary effects may probably be not univerſal; eſpecially where the Harmattan may come laden with the noiſome effluvia of a putrid ſwamp, which is not the caſe in this part of the country.

I am ſorry to be obliged to diſſent from ſuch reſpectable authority as that of Dr. Lind, to whoſe labours we are ſo much indebted, for his valuable directions for preſerving the health of ſeamen. I preſume his account of the Harmattan is derived from information, and not from his own obſervations, which are univerſally ſo juſt. Had he experienced it in perſon, he could not have called it "fatal and malignant;" and that "its "noxious vapour was deſtructive to *Blacks* as well as *Whites*;" "or that the mortality which it occaſioned was in proportion "to

" to the denſity and duration of the fog." He ſeems to confound the ſalubrity of the Harmattan, with thoſe baneful effects to the conſtitution, that follow the commencement of the periodical rains in April and May.

Theſe rains are uſhered in by hard guſts of wind, from the north-eaſt, and eaſt-north-eaſt, called *Tornadoes*, from a corruption of the Portugueſe word *Trovàdo*, a thunder-ſtorm, which occur uſually on the full and change of the moon, about the latter end of March, and in the months before mentioned. They are accompanied by ſevere thunder and lightning, and a very heavy ſhower of two or three hours continuance; which ſoftens the ſurface of the earth, that had been parched up by the preceding Harmattans, and a ſucceſſion of ſix or eight months dry weather in that burning climate; and gives an opportunity for the collected, ſtagnating, and putrid vapours, confined under its arid ſurface, to riſe and eſcape. Theſe, volatiliſed by the ſolar rays, which beam forth with redoubled heat, when the tornado is over, ſtrike the noſtrils with the moſt offenſive ſtench imaginable, and occaſion many bilious vomitings, fluxes, remittent and putrid fevers of the worſt kind. Beſides theſe, which are annual, there ſeems to be a collection of peſtiferous vapours, which remains impriſoned for a longer period, and does not emerge above the ſurface oftener than once in five, ſix, or ſeven years. The periods which I recollect to have been moſt fatal, were in 1755, or 1756, when Governor Melville, and moſt of the gentlemen and garriſon of Cape Coaſt, died; and in 1763, and 1769.* The mortality in ſome of theſe years

* The year 1775 was alſo fatal to many.

years, for they were not all equally fatal to the European ſettlers, was ſo great, that, as Dr. Lind ſays, "The living were ſcarce ſufficient to remove and bury the dead."

The fog which accompanies the Harmattan, is occaſioned by an infinite number of ſmall particles, floating in the air. They are ſo minute as to eſcape the touch, and elude every inveſtigation that I could deviſe. I could not ſucceed in attempting to examine them by the microſcope; though a part of them are depoſited upon the graſs, leaves of trees, and even upon the ſkin of the Negroes, which they make to appear whitiſh, or rather greyiſh. Theſe particles do not fly far above the ſurface of the ſea; the fog is not ſo thick on board the ſhips in Whydah road, at two or three miles diſtance from the ſhore, as it is on the beach: and in proportion to the diſtance from the ſhore, the fog decreaſes. At four or five leagues diſtance from it, the fog is entirely loſt, though the wind is felt ten or twelve leagues off.

Upon a careful inquiry concerning the face of the country, I learn, that except a few rivers, and ſome ſwamps and lakes of no conſiderable extent, the country behind Whydah, for four hundred miles back, is covered with verdure, open plains of graſs, with ſome clumps of trees, and ſome woods or foreſts. It riſes with a gentle and gradual aſcent, for about an hundred and fifty miles from the ſea, before there is the appearance of a hill; and behind thoſe hills I do not hear of any remarkable ranges of mountains. The ſurface is generally a looſe, ſandy ſoil; below that, a rich reddiſh earth; and not a ſtone to be found in it, of the ſize of a walnut. I hear of no barren tracks of arid ſand,

ſand, from whence thoſe particles are likely to be detached by the Harmattan. Dr. Lind writes, that "the Harmattan is ſaid "to ariſe from the conflux of ſeveral rivers about Benin;" but here, at Abomey, I felt it blowing from the north-eaſt, ſtronger than I uſually have elſewhere: and Benin bore from me ſouth-eaſt; therefore the Harmattan was not likely to originate there. On the Gold Coaſt, it generally blows from the north-eaſt; at the Iſles de Los, a little to the northward of Sierra Leone, from the eaſt-ſouth-eaſt; and at the river Gabon, near Cape Lopez, from the north-north-eaſt. The interſection of theſe points, or (what I would prefer) an eaſt line drawn from Cape Verd, cut by a north-eaſt one from the centre of the Gold Coaſt, and a north line from Cape Lopez, would, I think, point out a probable ſource for this extraordinary wind; but this is mere conjecture of my own.

As the buſineſs which brought me to Abomey, and which reſpected abuſes practiſed by the carriers of goods; who, in bringing them from the beach to the factories in Grigwhee, pilfered conſiderable quantities of them; was in ſome meaſure effected, by the King's promiſing that he ſhould take proper meaſures to prevent the like in future; I was now deſirous to return; and acquainting the King with my intention to do ſo, as ſoon as the Harmattan ſhould ceaſe, took my leave of him. This wind continued blowing freſh for two days longer, which detained me, as the weather was too diſagreeable for travelling. In the interim, a part of Dahomy-houſe took fire, which greatly endangered the whole of it. As ſoon as the hurry occaſioned by it was over, I was induced to wait again upon the King, on this occaſion, as a mark of reſpect. I obſerved, as I expected,

much confuſion and diſorder in the houſe; ſeveral heads had been cut off, and lay ſcattered about, to the number of twenty at leaſt; and I found the King much irritated againſt his women, who were accuſing each other of careleſſneſs, and each endeavouring to remove the blame of it from herſelf. It probably was not eaſy to aſcertain how the accident happened; however, the King, finding the inveſtigation difficult, and his diſpleaſure being perhaps ſomewhat appeaſed by the lives which he had taken away in the firſt impulſe of his anger, he ſettled the buſineſs, by ſelecting *nineteen* of them, whoſe reſidence was in the quarter where the fire broke out, and ſold them to me for ſlaves. On the third day, the Harmattan ceaſed, and I prepared for my departure; previous to which, the King ſent me a fat ſheep, an anker of brandy, and five cabeſs of cowries, towards defraying my expences on the road; and a further preſent of a fine ſtriped cotton cloth, and a handſome female ſlave.

I ſhould have ſet off on my return to Whydah early on the morning of the 16th of February, which was the laſt day of the *Annual Cuſtoms*, on which the King diſtributes a profuſion of preſents among his people; but I was prevailed upon to remain till evening, at the requeſt of my attendants, who hoped to pick up ſomething in the ſcramble of the day. On this occaſion, a large ſtage is erected near one of the palace gates, adorned with flags and umbrellas, and ſurrounded with a fence of thorns, to keep off the rabble. On this are piled heaps of Sileſias, checks, callicoes, and a variety of other European and Indian goods, with a great many fine cotton clothes that are manufactured in the Eyeo country, and a prodigious quantity of cowries. When all is ready, the King comes upon the ſtage, accompanied by any of



Cheesham sculp

of the governors, or captains of ſhips that may be there, and attended by the Tamegan, Mayhou, and a few others of his head men, to each of which he gives, according to their rank, the choice of an Eyeo cloth, and a ſtring of coral beads. His ſubordinate officers are then called over from among the crowd below, and receive each a piece of cloth, and ſome cowries, as a mark of their maſter's approbation and regard. The King then throws a bunch of cowries with his own hands among the crowd; on which his women begin to fling the remainder of the goods indiſcriminately among the multitude: the white men, if they pleaſe, and the Tamegan and his companions, aſſiſting. And finally, as ſome cruelty muſt accompany all their exhibitions, a man tied neck and heels, an alligator muzzled, and a couple of pigeons, with their wings clipped, are thrown off the ſtage among the crowd, where a confuſion, greater, if poſſible, than what has preceded, enſues, in ſcrambling for the heads of each, to the great amuſement of the King. Whoever are lucky enough to carry off the prizes, which conſiſt of the heads of the victims, are each rewarded with a handſome preſent. This is the laſt human ſacrifice at the Cuſtoms, and is a part of the ceremony which the Whites ſeldom ſtay to ſee performed; but, if report may be credited, the carcaſe of the human victim is almoſt wholly devoured, as all the mob below will have a taſte of it.

I reached *Agrimee*, on the borders of the wood, that night; and, after a few hours reſt, roſe before day, to get through this fatiguing part of the journey, before the heat of the morning, not halting until I got to my old friend, Jabrakou, at *Whybow*, with whom I ſpent that day, and a great part of the next; but

could not ſtay to accompany him at a great buffalo hunt, for which he was preparing. I arrived at Ardra on the evening of the 17th of February, where an occurrence happened, that might have terminated worſe for us than it did. I had my hammock ſlung in the white men's apartment, adjoining to the Mayhou's houſe; and the weather being very warm, the hammock-men, porters, &c. choſe to ſpread their mats, and lie in the piazza, and in the little court before it, in the open air. When we were all aſleep, except the captain of the gang, who, after having taken a nap, was regaling himſelf with a pipe, a leopard leaped over the wall, walked over thoſe who were ſleeping in the court, and, without hurting them, ſeized upon the fat ſheep which the King had given me, that was tied in a corner of the yard, and carried it off with him in an inſtant, over a wall eight feet high, before the man who ſaw him had time to get a ſhot at him.

The next day, February 18, 1772, I returned ſafe to my factory; and here my narrative ſhould conclude; but that I am tempted to add a few circumſtances that occurred in a ſubſequent journey to Dahomy. I had occaſion to viſit Abomey again in December 1773. The King was then infirm, and ſinking under years, as well as diſeaſe; he was confined to his chamber, but deſiring to ſee me, gave me an opportunity of inſpecting his private apartment. It was a neat detached room for ſleeping in; ſeparated from the court, in which it ſtood, by a wall about breaſt-high, the top of which was ſtuck full of human lower jaw-bones. The little area within it was paved with ſkulls; which I underſtood were thoſe of neighbouring kings and other perſons of eminence and diſtinction, whom having taken priſoners

in the courſe of his wars, he had placed there, that he might literally enjoy the ſavage gratification of trampling on the heads of his enemies. He did not long ſurvive this interview, but lingered on to the 17th of May, 1774, when he died, aged near ſeventy years, of which he had reigned about forty; and was ſucceeded by his ſon Adahoonzou.*

* In 1766, when I was at the court of Ahadee, he appeared to me to be about ſeventy. His perſon was rather tall: he was graceful in his manners, and very polite to ſtrangers, though the dread and terror of his own ſubjects. A. D.

HISTORY OF DAHOMY.

PART THE THIRD.

CONTAINING

THE LIFE

OF

ADAHOONZOU II.

AHADEE'S SON AND SUCCESSOR.

CHAP. I.

Confuſion on the King's death—Adahoonzou *choſen King*—*Takes arms againſt* Abavou—*Defeats him*—*Devotes his followers to death.*

A HORRID ſcene commences in the palace the moment the King expires. The wives of the deceaſed begin, with breaking and deſtroying the furniture of the houſe, the gold and ſilver ornaments

ornaments and utenſils, the coral, and in ſhort, every thing of value that belonged either to themſelves, or to the late King, and then murder one another.* This deſtruction continues till the Tamegan and Mayhou have announced the ſucceſſor, and he has taken poſſeſſion of the palace; which he does with all expedition, to ſtop the hand of deſolation, which ceaſes the inſtant the new King is declared.

Adahoonzou II. upon being nominated King, haſtened with his retinue to the palace gate, which he broke down, and taking poſſeſſion of it, put a ſtop to the carnage; but before he could accompliſh this, a great part of the furniture, &c. had been deſtroyed, and two hundred and eighty-five of the women murdered. The ſedan-chair, however, remained

* *Boſman*, an author of eſtabliſhed credit, ſpeaking of the cuſtoms at Whydah, prior to its conqueſts, relates, that, "upon the death of the King of that "country, and as ſoon as it was publickly known, every perſon fell to ſtealing "as much as he could of his neighbour's goods, without being liable to any "puniſhment. This ſcene of rapine and confuſion continued till a *new king* "was confirmed on the throne; who, by public proclamation, forbad it, and "was inſtantly and ſtrictly obeyed." He adds, "that the ſucceſſion to the "crown ſeemed to depend on the great officers, and their adherents; ſo that "the younger brother was frequently elevated to that rank, in excluſion of the "eldeſt." The temporary anarchy and tumult uſual in theſe countries, whenever the throne became vacant by the death of the ſovereign, may poſſibly have originated (as I have already hinted in a preceding note), in a deſign either to accelerate the choice of a ſucceſſor, in order, by that means, to prevent a civil war; or, to confirm the popular attachment to a *monarchical* form of government, by diſguſting them with the turbulence and licentiouſneſs incident to a *democracy*. But this is merely matter of conjecture; and, after all, might be no more, than would probably happen, upon ſetting any other ſlaves looſe for a while from the awe of a controuling and deſpotic power, and during its ſuſpenſion.

remained entire, and Ahadee was interred in it, accompanied, it is ſaid, by ſix of his wives, who were buried alive with him; all thoſe who had been killed in the affray being put into the ſame grave.

The new King inherited his father's propenſity for war, and an opportunity ſoon offered for gratifying this paſſion. In the autumn of 1774, the King of the exiled Whydahs, who had fled from their country on the Dahoman conqueſt, died. Theſe people occupy a ſmall ſwampy territory, between Whydah and Popo; and live in amity with the inhabitants of the latter, who aſſiſt them in their incurſions and depredations on the former. The Dahomans never fail to take ſome advantage of any diſſenſions that happen among theſe people; and one now occurred on the death of their King. For there were two competitors for the government, *Abavou*, or the *Swamp-Dog*, ſon to him who killed his own brother at Xavier, and ate his heart, as related in *Ahadee*'s *Memoirs*; and another, who was equally related to the deceaſed, named *Eyee*, or the *Monkey*. The former, who had the moſt numerous adherents, drove his rival out of the country. Adahoonzou determined to ſupport Eyee's pretenſions, without being at the trouble of enquiring into the merits of them, and ſent an army to his aſſiſtance. Abavou and his party were obliged to fly in their turn. The Dahomans drove them off the main land in the firſt campaign, and compelled them to take refuge on an iſland called *Foudou-Cong*, or *Feteeſh-Iſland*, which is in a lagoon, or broad expanſe of water, formed by a river in that country. There they remained inacceſſible during the periodical rains, becauſe the Dahomans had no canoes, and indeed knew nothing of the management of them;

them; but as ſoon as the waters ſubſided, they began an arduous undertaking. The army was reinforced with a prodigious number of men; they cut down the trees on each ſide of the lagoon, of which they made piles, and carried on a bridge, or cauſeway, on both ſides, directly to the iſland; and after a bloody conflict, in which many lives were loſt, they carried it.

Abavou and his party retreated upon the lagoon, in about eight hundred canoes, which they had with them; but their eſcape was prevented by the Dahomans, who had previouſly piled the river acroſs, a few miles below, where it was narrow, and kept poſſeſſion of both ſhores. The Whydahs remained in this diſtreſſing ſituation for ſome months, without any other ſubſiſtence than what they derived from the fiſh in the river; or by landing occaſionally in force, and beating up the quarters of ſome of the Dahomans, where they ſometimes found a ſmall ſupply of proviſions.

At laſt, Abavou, ſeeing his people worn out with famine and fatigue, and no proſpect of extricating them from their difficulties, reſolved to ſurrender himſelf. He thanked his followers for their ſervices, and told them, that the only return he could now make for their attachment and fidelity, was to deliver himſelf up, and endeavour to prevail on Adahoonzou to accept *his* life, as a peace-offering for their ſafety. With this determination he came on ſhore, and was ſent by the Dahoman general to the King, who ordered his head to be cut off. His adherents ſubmitted themſelves priſoners at diſcretion.

Although this tranſaction paſſed within a few miles of Whydah, and we could not fail of knowing every ſtage of it: for in fact there was nothing elſe to attend to, as *trade is entirely ſuſpended whilſt the country is at war*; yet Adahoonzou, to gratify his own vanity, ſent his *half-heads* to announce his victory to the governors of the forts there; and ſignified his wiſh, that they ſhould teſtify their joy at the event; which was complied with, a royal ſalute being fired at each of the forts, and by every ſhip in the road.

Soon after this, he thought fit to ſend a meſſenger to acquaint me, that he wiſhed to ſee me; and I waited on him towards the end of December 1775. At our firſt interview, he aſked me, if I had ever ſeen Abavou? On my replying that I had not, he added, "Then you ſhall now." I knew Abavou had been dead a month at leaſt, and had no curioſity to ſee his remains; but did not think it adviſeable to oppoſe the King's intention. Some women, to whom he gave directions about it, ſoon returned from an inner apartment of the palace, carrying a wide, ſhallow, braſs veſſel, that contained a large bundle, much bigger than a bee-hive, which was ornamented with two ſmall ſilk flags, each about the ſize of a handkerchief. This bundle was compoſed of various folds of cloth, the uppermoſt of cotton; within them were ſeveral ſilk wrappers, which being removed, Abavou's head made its appearance, lying in a china baſon. It was in perfect preſervation, as dry as an Egyptian mummy, and the hair ſmartly dreſſed. "That is the fellow," ſaid the King, "who gave me ſo much trouble." I replied, "You "ſeem to take care of him, now you have him." "Yes," ſaid he, "I am a warrior myſelf; and if I ſhould fall into the "enemies

" enemies hands, could wiſh to be treated with that decency, of " which I ſet the example."

He ordered a great number of the priſoners, who had ſurrendered on the late occaſion, to be ſhewn to me. I declined purchaſing any of them, as they were much emaciated, and appeared to be ſickly. " Since that is the caſe," ſaid he, " I " ſhall put them to death." I endeavoured to diſſuade him from that reſolution, and recommended that he would make them boilers of ſalt, as they came from the country which ſupplied them with that article, or to employ them in ſome other way. He ſaid, " it would be ſetting a bad example, and keep- " ing people in the country, who might hold ſeditious language: " that *his* was a peculiar government, and that theſe ſtrangers " might prejudice his people againſt it, and infect them with " ſentiments incompatible with it." I really cannot ſay what was at laſt the fate of theſe poor people; I know they were not kept for ſalt boilers, and doubt not ſome of them were purchaſed afterwards, when their health and ſtrength were recruited, for ſlaves for the Weſt-Indies; but thoſe who did not find purchaſers would undoubtedly be put to death; and the Annual Cuſtoms, which were then at hand, would produce a demand for two or three hundred of them, to " water with their blood " the graves of Adahoonzou's anceſtors."

Thus far we are indebted to the pains of Mr. Norris: *the continuation is collected from the communications of Mr.* Lionel Abſon, *whoſe intelligence, and long reſidence on the ſpot, have given him uncommon opportunities of collecting whatever was worthy attention.* A. D.

CHAP. II.

The King's ſurnames—Bravery of the King of Eyeo—*Annual Cuſtoms at* Dahomy—*Diſgrace of the* Yavougah—*The* Agaow *defeated by the* Sarrachees—*Death of the* Sawgan.

1774. THE ſame enterpriſing and barbarous ſpirit, the ſame reſtleſs and ſavage ambition which had characterized the long reign of Boſſa Ahadee, were inherited by Adahoonzou II. his ſon and ſucceſſor. This prince, as hath already been related, haſtened to ſeat himſelf on the ſtool of his deceaſed father, and thus put a ſtop to the horrid carnage which never fails to deſolate the palace, on the demiſe of the monarch.

Ai-yaw-ſoo, or the *Male* Oyſter*, was the favourite name which he aſſumed on his acceſſion to the government; and this he conſtantly made uſe of when ſwearing by, or ſpeaking of himſelf: but he was honoured with another title by the King of Eyeo, upon a very memorable occaſion.

About the time of Adahoonzou's accceſſion, the miniſters of the King of Eyeo, being tired of his government, had attempted, as had been their uſual practice, to depoſe their monarch in the manner which has been mentioned in the third chapter of Part Firſt. But this Prince had the good ſenſe to deſpiſe, and the

* Probably from being hard to crack.

the fortitude to reſiſt, ſuch a ridiculous cuſtom. He, therefore, peremptorily refuſed the parrot's eggs, which had been offered for his acceptance: telling his miniſters that he had as yet no inclination to take a *nap*, but that he was reſolved to *watch* for the benefit of his people.

The miniſters were extremely diſappointed and aſtoniſhed at this unexpected contempt of a political cuſtom, the abolition of which muſt deſtroy their power: they endeavoured, therefore, to effect by force, what they could not accompliſh by this ſtale trick. *Ochenoo*, the prime miniſter, put himſelf at the head of the rebel party, which, though formidable, was ſoon defeated by the adherents of the Sovereign, with great ſlaughter. Ochenoo himſelf, with all his numerous family, were put to death by the victors; who did not even ſpare the pregnant women, but ripped open their bellies, and cut to pieces the immature fruit of their womb. Thus, by his ſpirited conduct, the King of Eyeo emancipated himſelf from the tyranny of his miniſters, and eſtabliſhed a remarkable precedent to direct his ſucceſſors on ſimilar occaſions.

Upon the re-eſtabliſhment of his authority, after this event, Adahoonzou ſent an embaſſy of congratulation to the King of Eyeo, who beſtowed upon him the following proverbial ſurname: *Yee ma ſa hoo beate coſru gloh*; *an elephant cannot ſhelter himſelf under the ſwiſh-pots:* * intimating, it ſhould ſeem, that it

* Swiſh is the mud or clay of which their houſes, &c. are built. Swiſh-pots are broad, ſhallow baſkets of wicker-work, which, covered with thin clay and

it was as difficult to conceal the accompliſhments of Adahoonzou, as to hide an elephant in ſo ſmall a ſpace. This appellation was proclaimed, for two months, in all the market-places of Dahomy, and in the different adjacent friendly towns.

The firſt expedition which was undertaken by this Dahoman Prince has been already recorded, after the cloſe of the *Journey to the Court of Ahadee*, where it was obſerved, that a conſiderable number of the priſoners, who had fallen into Adahoonzou's hands, would probably be reſerved for the *annual cuſtoms*, in order to *water the graves of his anceſtors*. This, in fact, was the caſe; for Ai-yaw-ſoo took care to celebrate this anniverſary, by ſacrificing ſome hundreds of the devoted victims at the ſhrine of his progenitors.

1775. The ſolemnization of this inhuman feſtival was farther marked by the unmerited diſgrace and deſtruction of the Yavougah, or viceroy of Whydah, a moſt deſerving officer, who had long conducted himſelf, in a very tickliſh poſt, with the approbation of the Europeans, as well as the natives. The King, it is true, unfeeling as he was, afterwards repented of the raſh conduct that had deprived him of ſuch a valuable ſubject, and profeſſed the moſt ſincere contrition, for having too eaſily liſtened to the viceroy's baſe accuſers, the *Cokee* and the *Fooey*, two ſubordinate officers.

Theſe

and burning charcoal put under them, are uſed to deſtroy ants, and other vermin. They riſe but a few inches above the ground, and therefore cannot afford ſhelter to an elephant.

Theſe men had alledged, that the Yavou-gah, during the proceſſion of the King's women at the Cuſtoms, had been heard to exclaim, "Ah! ſee what a number of charming women are "devoted to the embraces of one man!—Thoſe given to us, "who have borne the brunt at the ſiege of Whydah, and de-"feated Abavou and his army, are hardly good enough for "houſe-ſweepers.—It is ungenerous—but we are Dahoman-"men, and muſt ſubmit." The viceroy had been accuſed likewiſe of having encroached on the royal prerogative, by wearing ſandals, and ordering a white man's umbrella to be carried over his head; faults of too heinous a nature to be overlooked by a Dahoman Monarch. In ſhort, his malicious calumniators had practiſed every art, to render the unſuſpecting *Cabeceer** odious to his Sovereign; and they effectually ſucceeded.

It is uſual for the King of Dahomy, at the *annual cuſtoms*, as hath been before obſerved, to hear complaints, puniſh delinquents, and reward merit. It is likewiſe the practice, on the ſame occaſion, for the officers of all denominations, civil or military, to ſwear allegiance to the Sovereign. The viceroy of Whydah, who holds the third place under the King, repaired, among the reſt, to Abomey, to celebrate this anniverſary.

The Tamegan, or prime miniſter, having proſtrated himſelf on the earth, rubbing his face, and ſmearing his head with duſt, harangued for an hour and an half, to expreſs his loyalty to Adahoonzou's perſon and government. The Mayhou, or maſter of

* From the Portugueſe *Cabeceiro*, a head man.

of the ceremonies, who ſpoke next, declared that the Tamegan, in his ſpeech, had gone over the whole duty of a Dahoman Caboceer, and left nothing for him to add: he deſired, therefore, to ſtand upon the ſame ground with the prime miniſter, and begged that, when deficient, the King might remind him of his duty. Adahoonzou was extremely delighted with theſe demonſtrations of attachment and fidelity, and taking off his hat, called aloud—"True, Tamegan and Mayhou,—ſo it is;" * while the whole aſſembly teſtified their ſubmiſſion by kiſſing the earth, and rolling their bodies in the duſt.

The Yavougah then roſe up, and attempted to ſpeak; when the King, advancing briſkly towards him, with ſparkling eyes, and a ſtern countenance, gave him a violent ſlap in the face; after which he puſhed him down, and laid his hand on his cutlaſs. At this inſtant the Tamegan, by way of interceſſion, began again to rub his face in the duſt; which Adahoonzou obſerving, he ſaid, with a forced ſmile, "Tamegan, you have "prevented the Turkey buzzards † from having a good dinner to-day." He then deſired the Yavougah to ſit down, while the ceremony proceeded in the uſual manner.

Among the ſpeeches delivered on this occaſion, that of the *Sawgan* ‡ was very remarkable. He ſaid, "That it was his "duty to accompany the Agaow to the field; and that if ever "he ſhould betray the leaſt ſymptom of cowardice, or ſhew the

* An expreſſion, which in that country denotes the King's thanks and approbation.

† Birds of prey.

‡ A military officer of high rank.

" the ſoles of his feet to the enemy, he hoped the King would " have his cutlaſs ready, to behead him at the moment of his " return. But," added he, " this will never happen: for " ſhould I ever have cauſe to ſuſpect that I am accuſed of " treachery; of turning my back to the foe; or having given " cauſe of complaint; I ſhall never afford the Tamegan an oppor- " tunity of aſking impertinent queſtions, or of interfering be- " tween me and my Sovereign: I prefer death at any time." This gallant ſpeech was much applauded by the King and the ſurrounding chiefs; and a loud laugh of approbation was beſtowed on the hero, by Majeſty, and all preſent, though they little ſuſpected that an occaſion would ſoon offer to try the ſincerity of the Sawgan's profeſſions.

As the Dahomans are extremely cautious in their expreſſions, eſpecially when addreſſing their ſuperiors, this ſpeech merits particular notice. A becoming reſentment at the King's raſh behaviour to an old and faithful ſervant, a thorough contempt of the Yavougah's puſillanimity, in ſubmitting to ſuch ignominous treatment, when the means of avoiding it were in his own hands; theſe operating together, made ſuch a deep impreſſion on the Sawgan's ingenuous ſoul, that the preſence of Majeſty itſelf could not reſtrain this juſt reprehenſion both of King and miniſter.

The Viceroy, after the King's violent treatment, was often obliged to ſubmit to diſagreeable examinations; during which, one day, the man who had uſually attended at his gate, was killed in his preſence, for refuſing to accuſe his maſter of ſuppoſed crimes, to which he had been preſumed to be privy.

Two of his meſſengers ſoon after ſhared the ſame fate; and *Doſſugah*, his trading man, would have alſo fallen a victim, but for the interceſſion of his ſiſter, whoſe intereſt ſurpaſſed that of all the other women in the King's houſe. This man ſent a meſſage to Mr. Abſon, the governor of William's-Fort, entreating him to offer any price for the Yavougah, who, when replaced, would reimburſe the ſum that might be demanded for his ranſom. The governor accordingly ſent a ſervant to the Tamegan, begging his interference; with a caution, however, not to deliver the meſſage, if he ſhould previouſly hear of the viceroy's death; but in that caſe, to pretend that he had been ſent to buy Guinea-hens. Upon the arrival of the meſſenger at Calmina, he was informed, that the Yavougah's coat had been ſtripped from his back, at the King's door, and that his perſon had been ſeized and carried to the Mayhou's houſe, from whence he never came out.

The Mayhou was accuſed of having done every thing in his power to get the Yavougah diſgraced, in revenge for the treatment which his (the Mayhou's) brother had met with from the Viceroy's father, which ended in his death. The Mayhou had often ſworn vengeance againſt the Yavougah's family; and meeting a favourable opportunity, he did not let it ſlip.

Although Mr. Abſon's meſſage was not delivered in Dahomy, yet the King had been informed, and afterwards told him, of the fineſſe about the Guinea-hens. He ſaid, however, "That "he was ſorry for what had happened; that he had been im- "poſed upon, and that he would revenge the Yavougah's death "upon his calumniators;" adding, at the ſame time, "that Doſ- "ſugah's

" ſugah's meſſage to ſave him was a piece of unpardonable im-
" pudence, which he could not eaſily forgive." Indeed he afterwards puniſhed him, by detaining him ſeveral years in Dahomy, before he would permit him to return to Whydah.

The Yavougah's ſucceſſor, one of his accuſers, ſoon after became inſane, which the King told Governor Abſon had been done by the Fetiſh, to revenge his predeceſſor's death. " I now
" call you," ſaid Adahoonzou, " to thank you for your meſ-
" ſage, and I wiſh you had not been ſo much of a Dahoman-man
" as to have made uſe of any artifice. I was then very angry in-
" deed; but might have liſtened to a white man. You would
" have had ſome trouble to convince me, but I now tell you,
" that the Yavougah was falſely accuſed; I confeſs his death
" was the worſt thing I ever countenanced."

1775. Soon after the Cuſtoms, the Agaow marched againſt the Sarrachees, a neighbouring nation, who gave him a warm reception, broke his lines, and penetrated to the poſt of the Sawgan, who had been ſtationed in the rear, to guard the baggage and the women, belonging to the Dahoman army. This brave officer, finding himſelf hard preſſed, and without ſupport, as he had detached the flower of his party to aſſiſt the Agaow, deſired the women, and his attendants, chiefly boys, to provide for their own ſafety without delay; he reſolving, ſingly, to contend with the enemy, while he was able to wield his ſabre. Accordingly he called for his large *ſtool*, ſat down, and with more than Roman coolneſs waited the approach of the foe. As the Sarrachees advanced, he ſtood up, fired his muſquet, loaded and fired again, killing his man at each diſ-

charge, till, ſurrounded and overpowered with numbers, he unſheathed his cutlaſs, and ruſhed among the thickeſt of the enemy, laying many dead at his feet. His victors, however, ſpared his life, and offered to treat with Adahoonzou for his ranſom. The King ſoon after paid the price of his freedom, and he was releaſed; but could never be prevailed upon to return home, although many meſſengers had been ſent to endeavour to bring him back. To the laſt of theſe he obſerved, "That "although of all the King's ſubjects he, perhaps, might be the "moſt ugly, yet there was none more loyal. He was ſenſible "of the King's goodneſs, but deſired that he might be reminded "of his, the Sawgan's, ſpeech, at the watering of Ahadee's "grave, which would fully account for his late, and preſent "conduct." Having delivered this meſſage, he drew his ſword, and immediately put a period to his life.

CHAP. III.

The Poſſu *defeated by the* Mahees—*The* Agaow's *barbarous victory over them—Reflections on* Adahoonzou's *conduct—Expedition againſt* Apee—*&c.*

THE manuſcript from which theſe Memoirs are compiled, has not furniſhed any farther particulars concerning the unſucceſsful enterpriſe againſt the Sarrachees. Yet it is highly probable

probable, that the Agaow was completely defeated, as it appears that he was ſoon after diſgraced, and the command of the army beſtowed on the Poſſu, or ſecond general. Under the conduct of this leader, the Dahoman forces marched into a province belonging to the Mahees:* here they were once more repulſed; and the Poſſu being ſlain, the Agaow was reſtored to his former rank.

1777. Enraged at his repeated diſgraces, and ſtimulated by reſentment againſt the Mahees, Adahoonzou reſolved to be amply revenged. The moſt vigorous preparations were made for another expedition; a numerous army was ordered to be levied; and the King threatened to lead it in perſon. He contented himſelf, however, with ſending the Tamegan to the camp, where he remained fifteen days. When the troops were ready to march, the King repaired to the plain where they had encamped, in order to review them, and to hear the chiefs ſwear allegiance. This ceremony being performed, the Agaow led them againſt the enemy, accompanied by the Tamegan, who continued with him during the firſt four days of his march.

The Mahees, making but a feeble reſiſtance, were routed with great ſlaughter; the country was ravaged, and men, women, and children put to the ſword, without diſtinction, and without mercy. To complete the horrid ſcene, and to ſtrike the inhabitants

* The Mahees, who had been much perſecuted during the preceding reign, in order to live on peaceable terms with Dahomy, claimed kindred with Adahoonzou, whoſe mother was a Mahee woman. This will account for their ſubſequent conduct, in affording him ready aſſiſtance in his wars. It does not appear what provocation they had given to occaſion the preſent attack.

bitants with terror, the bodies of the ſlain were hung upon the trees, their heads being reſerved for the King, who, upon this occaſion, had publiſhed a reward of *twelve akies of cowries* * for each head, in addition to the price which he had uſually allowed for a living ſlave: "For," ſaid he, "I want heads, not ſlaves."

The inſatiable thirſt after blood, the barbarous vanity of being conſidered the ſcourge of mankind, and the ſavage pomp of dwelling in a houſe garniſhed with ſkulls, and ſtained with human gore, ſeem to be the only motives for the atrocious actions which have juſt been related; and indeed it is difficult to aſſign any other reaſons for Adahoonzou's conduct hitherto. It will, however, ſoon appear, that a deſire for plunder had ſome ſhare in determining him to attack the neighbouring ſtates that bordered on the ſea.

He had long regarded *Apee*, *Porto Novo*, † and *Baaagree*, with a jealous eye, on account of the great number of ſhips which reſorted to theſe ports, while Whydah was almoſt totally abandoned. He adopted the policy of his grandfather Trudo, and reſolved, at the ſame time, to extend his dominions, and to appropriate to himſelf the European commodities which had been accumulated by his neighbours.

But, as the ſtates which had thus become the object of Adahoonzou's jealouſy and ambition, are ſurrounded with lakes and ſwamps, the approach was rendered difficult to the Dahomans, who

* Thirty ſhillings ſterling. † The ſea-port belonging to Ardra.

who were unacquainted with the management of canoes. It was therefore found neceſſary to ſecure the friendſhip and aſſiſtance of one of the maritime princes.

1778. Frequent meſſages had been obſerved to be exchanged between the Kings of Ardra and Dahomy; but as their negociations were carried on with the moſt profound ſecrecy, it was impoſſible, for ſome time, to penetrate into their deſigns. At laſt the plot was diſcovered, when it was ripe for execution. Dahomy was to attack by land, while Ardra undertook to intercept the fugitives that ſhould attempt to eſcape by water; and Apee was the devoted object.

The Dahoman forces, in four diviſions, led by the Agaow, the Poſſu, the Zoheinoo, and the Phuſſupoh,* made a bold puſh to carry the town and country at once. The enemy gave way, and the aſſailants, fluſhed with ſucceſs, expected an eaſy conqueſt; when, all of a ſudden, they found themſelves ſurrounded by a ſwamp, and attacked by *Hooroo*, an Apee chief, at the head of eight hundred men. This brave detachment, for a conſiderable time, maintained an unequal and bloody conflict with the whole Dahoman army, of which many fell, and two of their generals were wounded.

A Dahoman chief, named *Allopwee*, having offered to fight Hooroo at ſingle combat, the challenge was inſtantly accepted, and Allopwee was ſhot through the head, by the firſt ball diſcharged from Hooroo's muſquet; upon which this gallant chief-

tain

* Names of the offices, not of particular perſons.

tain was attacked by the whole body of the Agaow's troops. Never did ſoldier make a braver reſiſtance. At the head of a handful of men, with undaunted intrepidity, he fought a hoſt of foes, till he and his party fell to a man.

The victors then laid waſte the whole country with fire and ſword; making ſix hundred men, and a great number of women and children, priſoners. They likewiſe found much booty in the houſes of the King and principal Caboceers, conſiſting chiefly of many valuable European articles, ſuch as ſilks, laced hats, canes, and trinkets of gold and ſilver. But nothing pleaſed the King of Dahomy ſo much as a green decanter, ſhaped like a common bottle, but flatted, and having two cavities for the finger and thumb, for the more conveniently pouring the contents into a glaſs. The outſide was ornamented with about a dozen of heads, raiſed, and of the ſize of a ſmall medallion. Adahoonzou uſed to ſhew this to the Europeans, as the greateſt curioſity that he had met with in all his wars, declaring, that no white man had ever brought him ſuch a valuable trinket, although he always made a point of paying liberally for ſuch rarities as ſuited his taſte.

While the Dahomans were employed in ravaging the country, and ſecuring their priſoners, the Ardras repaired in full force to the river, in order to intercept ſuch of the enemy as might attempt to make their eſcape by water. But the King of Apee, ſurrounded by a body of faithful adherents, forced a paſſage, ſword in hand, through the midſt of the Ardra army, and embarking in their canoes, together with the King's women and

and children, a Portugueſe captain, and ſixty-ſeven ſlaves, his property, landed them ſafe at *Wemey*.

Having thus conducted their King and his family to a place of ſafety, the Apees reimbarked in their canoes, and went in queſt of the Ardrahs, whom they fought, and put to flight; and had it not been for two canoes, each mounting four braſs guns, and twenty-four blunderbuſſes, which belonged to Antonio Vaz, * and which covered their retreat, the victory would have been perfect. After this advantage, the Apees haſtened to ſupport their fellow-citizens on ſhore, and arrived in time to engage and diſorder part of the rear of the Dahoman army: but the main body having croſſed the ſwamp before their arrival, their loſs was inconſiderable, and the Agaow ſeems to have known nothing of the rencontre till the Apees had retired.

Thus far ſucceſsful, the Agaow proudly conducted his ſoldiers to Calmina, accompanied with the Apee priſoners, the

* *Antonio Vaz Coelho* was a free negro, born in Brazil, where he had been taught to read, write, and keep accounts. He had inherited ſome property from his parents; and being of an enterpriſing diſpoſition, he had made ſeveral voyages to Ardrah, where he at laſt ſettled, and became a very reſpectable trader. In this country he had made ſome very judicious matrimonial connections, having choſen his wives from among the firſt families in that place. Thus he attained conſiderable influence, which enabled him to indulge his ambition, to aſſume a political character, and he acquired a great aſcendancy in the public councils of the community in which he lived. He had an uncommon ſhare of vanity, and was exceſſively fond of military enterpriſes, which led him to affect a ſplendour of equipage far above that of his companions. He generally armed his dependants with blunderbuſſes, which he purchaſed from the Europeans; and war canoes armed with ſwivels, were by him firſt introduced.

major part of whom were reſerved to bleed at the Annual Cuſtoms, which were then near at hand; and in the mean time, a daily ſacrifice of one or two was made at the King's gate.

Adahoonzou was much diſappointed at the eſcape of the King of Apee, and would have certainly puniſhed his protectors, had he not dreaded the reſentment of the King of Eyeo, with whom the ſtate of Wemey was then on a friendly footing; but upon the whole he was highly gratified at the conduct of his generals and ſoldiers; paid them handſomely for their priſoners, and gave them leave to take a little repoſe, or to follow their own private occaſions.

CHAP. IV.

The paths cleared—Barbarous execution of ſix Apee *women.*

1779. AT the approach of the Cuſtoms, Adahoonzou ſummoned all his caboceers and traders, on whom he beſtowed conſiderable preſents and honours, giving them horſes, umbrellas, coral, and other marks of diſtinction. Some were likewiſe honoured with drums and flags; and the black traders were allowed to ſit upon chairs: a privilege that, heretofore, they had not been permitted to enjoy.

He

He then ordered all his ſubjects to ſet about clearing the paths, giving each caboceer a ſtring, meaſuring ten yards, the intended width of the roads. Thus a ſpacious communication was opened, not only between each town and the capital, but all the way down to the beach. With incredible labour and fatigue, a paſſage was cut through the wood at *Apoy*; the gullies were filled up, and the hurdle bridges, over the ſwamps, were widened.

When this work was completed, the King ſaid, with a vain-glorious air, "If any one be deſirous of paying me a viſit, he "ſhall not have it to ſay, that thorns or briars impede his "march."

The commencement of the Cuſtoms being arrived, the Half-heads, as uſual, were diſpatched to invite the European governors to witneſs the ceremony. On their arrival at Abomy, they found Adahoonzou in his palace, called Dahomy, ſeated amidſt four hundred of his women, all very richly dreſſed. Obſerving, at a little diſtance, ſix women on their knees, with deſpair painted in their countenances, the white men who were preſent ſhuddered with apprehenſion for the miſerable victims, and anticipated, in idea, a ſcene big with horror, but inferior in barbarity to that which was about to be realized. The monſter Adahoonzou deſired that a bundle might be brought; which untying with his own hands, he preſented the contents—five cutlaſſes!—to five of his fat and over-grown women; and having ordered the ſix kneeling females to be placed before him, he made a ſpeech to the following purport: "Theſe women "were brought from Apee by my army; I took them

" home, domeſticated them in my family—treated them as my " wives;—but, not contented, they made their eſcape to their " native country; where, however, they found nothing but the " ground and the trees; for every thing elſe had been deſtroyed " by my troops. They afterwards ſurrendered themſelves " to the King of Ardrah; but he was too juſt to keep them, " and has therefore ſent them back to me, to receive the proper " reward for their ingratitude. This woman," clapping his hand on the head of one of them, who ſuckled a child, " is " a relation of the King of Ardah;—but remember, that it is " not her reſpectable anceſtry that prevents her from ſharing the " ſame fate with the reſt;—no—her infant ſaves her for a " while;—but ſhe muſt ſhortly *paſs out at the ſame door* with " her companions!"

Having concluded this truly ſavage harangue, the woman and child were put aſide, and the five other victims were conducted to the ſpot where men, horſes, and bullocks are uſually ſacrificed for the Cuſtoms. There, being ordered to kneel, with their faces touching the ground, the women who held the cutlaſſes began to put in execution their infernal commiſſion, in a manner too ſhocking for deſcription! One of the unhappy wretches was quickly delivered from her miſery, her head being ſevered from her body at four ſtrokes! The ſufferings of the reſt, from the awkwardneſs of the executioners, was protracted for twenty minutes; the King ſtanding over, and inſtructing them.—" Not that way—hold your cutlaſs thus—give it me—" 'tis ſo—imagine you are chopping wood." Thus did the helliſh monſter direct the miniſters of his cruelty to cut off heads, with as much apathy as if indeed he had been chopping wood;

wood; while the air was rent with the ſhouts of his grandees, calling over his * *ſtrong names*, and burſting into ſuch peals of laughter, that a diſtant witneſs of this horrid ceremony would have been led to believe that ſome very diverting ſcene was exhibiting.

The ſufferers were all very comely, well-made women; and it is very remarkable, that not a groan was heard from any of them during their execution.

Many of the Apee priſoners ſuffered the ſame fate, few being carried to market. Indeed this wretch more than once has been known to put to death many hundreds of his captive enemies, without reſerving a ſingle ſlave for ſale, or even for the payment of his debts.

CHAP. V.

Death of the Mayhou—*Claim of the* Eyeos—Dahomans *repulſed at* Agoonah—*Expedition of* Adahoonzou *at the head of his women*—*Defeat and death of the Kings of* Agoonah *and* Sarrachee—*Famine*.

1781. THE death of the old Mayhou, which happened ſome time afterwards, made ſome ſtir in Dahomy. For though the dying recommendation of a beloved and wiſe counſellor may be of

* An expreſſion according to the Dahoman idiom.

of great weight with a King, in the choice of his ſucceſſor, yet the defeaſance of a right, eſteemed as hereditary, cannot fail to alarm thoſe whoſe families are all intereſted in the deciſion. The old man had ſhewn a great unwillingneſs to be ſucceeded by his ſon, who was a very profligate character; and therefore, a little before he expired, he ſent the coat and ſtool which he had received, on his appointment, from Ahadee, to a perſon that he eſteemed, called *Avoga*, to be delivered to Adahoonzou, as a mark that the bearer was worthy to ſucceed him. On the demiſe of the Mayhou, this being quickly known, the King immediately called the Tamegan, ſhewed him what he had received from the Mayhou, and told him by whom it had been brought. The Tamegan remained ſilent for ſome time; then burſting into a flood of tears, ſaid, "The Mayhou had good "reaſon for what he had done; for never had father ſuch "wicked and ungrateful children; yet," continued he, "for "my ſake, and for the country's peace, I entreat that one of "his ſons may be inveſted in the office; myſelf will take charge "of his education, and be reſponſible for his conduct." *

The King granted the Tamegan's requeſt; but the new Mayhou, in ſpite of all the pains beſtowed upon him, turned out to be a weak, drunken, and worthleſs fellow; and the Tamegan was a thouſand times upbraided for his ill-judged partiality to the family of the deceaſed caboceer.

The

* The deceaſed Mayhou had many ſons, all equally abandoned. Six of them had diſhonoured their father's bed; and ſome of them had conſpired againſt his life.

The King of Dahomy, like the Grand Signior, is heir to all his ſubjects. On the death of any of his officers, their whole effects, of which their wives and children are conſidered to be a part, go to the King. The late Mayhou had been very long in office, and conſequently was ſuppoſed to poſſeſs much property.

The Eyeo ambaſſadors, therefore, who happened to be in Dahomy, at the time of his death, thought this a good opportunity to encreaſe the amount of the annual tribute, which they had been ſent to receive. They made a demand of one hundred of the Mayhou's women, which Adahoonzou endeavoured to elude; but they inſiſted on his compliance, and, in peremptory terms, refuſed to return without them. The King, however reluctantly, was obliged to give them ſome of the women, in order to get rid of them.

Tributary ſtates can never ſatisfy the avarice of the powers, from whom they have been obliged to purchaſe peace by ſuch a diſgraceful acknowledgment. Three months after the departure of his ambaſſadors, a meſſenger arrived from the King of Eyeo, with a demand of the reſt of the Mayhou's women; accompanied with a threat, that, in caſe of non-compliance on the part of Dahomy, the Eyeo general *Banchenoo* ſhould be ſent to fetch them.

Adahoonzou was mortified to the laſt degree at this haughty meſſage: but he was obliged to ſubmit, without daring to ſhew his reſentment. Not chooſing, however, to part with the Dahoman women who had belonged to the Mayhou, he ſent his army

army into the neighbouring country of Agoonah, to procure wherewithal to ſatisfy the Eyeo monarch. There they met with a vigorous oppoſition, their leader, the *Cakawo*,* with ſome other officers of note and many ſoldiers, being ſlain.

This news being brought to the King of Dahomy at mid-day, he immediately got up, girt on his cartouch-box, ſhouldered his firelock, and marched towards Agoonah, at the head of eight hundred armed women.

The whole country was in motion, men, women, and children. The King's big mother, *who never dies, though ſhe is ſometimes put to death*,† fell down lifeleſs, before ſhe got a league from Calmina: many were trodden to death, and not a few expired from exceſſive fatigue, and the extreme heat of a vertical ſun. Adahoonzou ſent a meſſage to the European governors, begging that they might not be alarmed, as he was only going to take a walk, and would preſently return. Mr. Abſon ſent two of his ſervants, armed, with a meſſage, ſignifying his ſorrow at not being permitted to accompany him in perſon. This compliment was very gratifying to the King; he talked of it to the day of his death, and had it put in all his ſongs.

On the approach of this uncommon army, the people fled from Agoonah to Sarrachee, purſued by the Dahomans. The King

* A military officer.

† The expreſſion in italics is left as in the MS. The fact is, that beſides the King's real mother, there is always a nominal one, who holds this title, as a mark of honour and rank among the women.

King, now exceedingly fatigued, pitched his tent, and took a little repoſe. Soon after he received ſome of the heads which had belonged to the flying enemy, and was informed that they had retreated to a mountain that was very difficult of acceſs. Upon receiving this intelligence, Adahoonzou returned to Calmina, after having told the Agaow that he expected the Kings of Agoonah and Sarrachee would be his gueſts at the enſuing Cuſtoms.

This hint was ſufficient. The Agaow inveſted the mountain to which the enemy had retired, and where they had dug many cavities, in which they occaſionally concealed themſelves. After many ſkirmiſhes, the Dahomans diſcovered the lurking places of the foe, from which they ſmoked them, by fires ſtrewed with pepper. The poor wretches, therefore, to the number of eighteen hundred, together with their two Kings, were thus obliged to ſurrender at diſcretion.

1782. Agoonah dying by the way, his head was carried to Dahomy. The captive Prince of Sarrachee was led in triumph, and placed at the King's gate, on the day that preceded the Cuſtoms. There he was inſulted by the populace; which at firſt Adahoonzou pretended to take offence at; reprimanded his officers, for ſuffering a King to be treated with ſuch indignity; ordered his hands to be untied; clothed him; and recommended him to *Jabo*, the maſter of the horſe, with injunctions to take particular care of him. Nevertheleſs, four days afterwards, this unfortunate prince was brought in a baſket, tied like a hog, and ordered to be thrown from the ſtage, which is uſually erected at the Cuſtoms, while there was yet day-light enough

for the ſpectators to diſcover who he was: his head was cut off below; ſcrambled for; and probably devoured by the mob, to the inexpreſſible gratification of the aſtoniſhed ſpectators.

Among the other exhibitions at the anniverſary, which has been frequently alluded to, a prodigious quantity of cowries, European merchandize, and cloths, manufactured in the country, are collected, and piled upon a ſtage, * to be thrown among the populace. It happened, upon this occaſion, that ſome of theſe articles were miſſing; and it was diſcovered, that they had been conveyed away to the ſhed allotted for the white men. The Europeans had obſerved the theft, but were loth to accuſe the guilty: however, ſtrict enquiry was made, and ſeveral of the ſuſpected perſons loſt their heads.

This year was remarkable for a great ſcarcity of proviſions; inſomuch, that, had it not been for the wild *mangoes*, *caſhews*, and other ſpontaneous productions of the woods, half the country would have ſtarved. This crude diet was the occaſion of a great mortality, by the flux, and other diſorders.

* See the Journey to the Court of Ahadee.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Succeſs on the beach at Badagree—*Defeat of the* Agaow—*The King denounces vengeance againſt* Badagree.

BADAGREE, a neighbouring port of trade, became next the object of Adahoonzou's ambition.

It has been ſaid, in the preceding part of theſe memoirs, that a lake, or river, runs parallel to the ſea, along all this coaſt, forming a ſmall ſtrip of land or beach, that lies between the ſea and the river. This is only inhabited, occaſionally, by a few people belonging to the ſhipping, and ſome natives in the pay of the captains, for the convenience of receiving goods from on board, and tranſporting them acroſs the lake, and through the adjacent ſwamps, to the different factories, which are ſettled at the towns, ſome miles back in the country, of which the map will convey the idea better than words.

1783. A ſmall party of Dahomans made an excurſion to Badagree beach, where they ſeized ſome people, who belonged to Prince *Davee*, and who had been employed as porters, or water-rollers, by the Europeans. They likewiſe cut the water warps,* broke the canoes and gang caſks, and brought off ſome little booty.

This

* Ropes uſed for hauling the caſks of water through the ſurf. By the help of theſe, the fatiguing and troubleſome buſineſs of watering the ſhips is managed; the people in the long-boat, which is moored without the breakers, aſſiſted by thoſe on ſhore, perform this neceſſary work.

This trifling ſucceſs was very acceptable to Adahoonzou, who reſolved to attack the town of Badagree itſelf. Accordingly, ſome months afterwards, the Agaow purſued the ſame rout; but finding no plunder on the beach, the army was ferried over the river by the Ardrahs; contrary, however, to the intentions of the King of Dahomy, who had directed them to make a circuitous march to a place which was fordable, and where they would not have occaſion even to wet their cartouch-boxes. This intended manœuvre was dictated by a ſuſpicion, that the Ardrahs might play him a trick, by tranſporting his army, and then leaving them in a hoſtile country, without the means of retreating, ſhould they happen to meet with a defeat. However, he betrayed no want of confidence in them, leſt they ſhould refuſe to furniſh him with ſome promiſed auxiliaries.

The Badagrees getting intelligence that the Dahoman army had croſſed the river, concealed themſelves in the ſwamp, among the ruſhes. The Agaow, next morning continuing his march, without ſuſpicion, fell into the ambuſcade. The Badagrees, who are good markſmen, ruſhed upon the Dahomans with great fury, and put them into diſorder; killing the Poſſu, and a great number of ſoldiers. The Agaow, however, rallied his ſcattered forces, cut a paſſage through the enemy, and killing twelve with his own hand, made a maſterly retreat to the river, where he was the laſt man that embarked. The army having regained the beach, by means of the Ardrah canoes, the Agaow diſpatched a meſſenger to Dahomy, with the diſagreeable news of his defeat; alledging, at the ſame time, that the Ardrahs had been privy to the Badagree ambuſcade.

Adahoonzou

Adahoonzou ſent him a kind invitation to return home, and requeſted that he might not afflict himſelf on account of his late misfortune; adding, "that his late Agaow ſhould yet be furniſhed with the means of conquering Badagree, although the deſtruction of Dahomy itſelf ſhould be the conſequence. He was ſorry," he ſaid, "that an opportunity had been given to the Ardrahs, of cheating him,—but he would look for another path."

The loſs of the Poſſu, and the many ſoldiers who fell with him, cauſed great murmurings among the people, which, however, ſubſided on the arrival of the army in Dahomy. About this time, the Governor of Williams Fort received a long letter from *Onum*, Prince Davee's ſon, containing, among other particulars, a meſſage to Adahoonzou, accuſing Ardrah of treachery, and ſaying, that Dahomy was in danger. The King made anſwer, "My name is *Deddi ma tronu*. I am eaſy in my pace, but always in purſuit; let Ardrah take care of his own country."

It may ſeem ſtrange, that the King of Dahomy ſhould have received a friendly meſſage from Badagree, againſt which he had commenced hoſtilities; and to account for this circumſtance, it is proper to obſerve, that this ſtate was divided by party, which, on the preceding year, had occaſioned the expulſion of *Ginguem*, their late Prince. He had been ſeized by his ſubjects, and delivered on board a Portugueſe ſhip, to be carried to Brazil, where he had received his education. They had furniſhed him with about twenty ſlaves for his ſubſiſtence, together with a letter for the General of *Bahia*, deſiring that he might keep Ginguem there. Thus Badagree, being torn by civil

civil diſſentions, Dahomy endeavoured to turn this circumſtance to his own advantage.

At the celebration of the Cuſtoms, Adahoonzou would not ſuffer his ſinging-men to touch on Badagree in their ſongs—this ſubject was, according to the Dahoman idiom, *too ſtrong for him*. He had loſt many brave officers and men, and denounced eternal vengeance againſt thoſe who had been the occaſion of his diſgrace. He called together the Agaow, and all his captains; and while he watered his mother's grave, made a public ſpeech of three hours; in the courſe of which he ſtooped down, and taking up a portion of earth in his fingers three times, he as often ſwore by his mother, that, "If "he did not make a total conqueſt of Badagree, he was "unworthy to be called her and Ahadee's ſon."

CHAP. VI.

A numerous army ſent againſt Badagree—*The* Dahoman *camp attacked, with great ſlaughter*—Dahomans *gain a deciſive victory—Death of the* Phuſſupo.

1784. ABOUT two months after the Cuſtoms, the King prepared for another campaign. The army encamped in the neighbourhood of Calmina, and was quickly joined by a numerous body of auxiliaries from the inland countries of *Mahee* and *Nago*.* Thus augmented, the Agaow decamped, and marched

* Of this country nothing more is known than the name. J. F.

marched in great force towards Badagree, conducted by guides, which had been provided by the King of Eyeo. He laid waſte the whole country in his progreſs, making many priſoners, which were immediately ſent to Eyeo, according to a treaty which had been previouſly entered into with that Prince.

Having arrived in the vicinity of Badagree, he reſted three days, and on the 4th encamped with his numerous army. The ground occupied for this purpoſe was ſo extenſive, that it required *four hours* to walk from one extremity to the other. *Seſſu*, an Ardrah Caboceer, gave the Agaow aſſurances of a plentiful ſupply of proviſions during the inveſtment of Badagree, although it ſhould continue for three years; as did likewiſe *Koſſu*, a Nago chief, belonging to Eyeo. The operations of the Dahoman army were directed by the Eyeo meſſengers, who had conducted them hither; and nothing of importance was undertaken without their concurrence.

The powerful King of *Lagos* was prevailed upon, by bribes and promiſes, to join this formidable confederacy; and he undertook to prevent the Badagrees from receiving ſupplies of corn from his dominions. For this purpoſe, he equipped thirty-two large canoes, and ſtationed them three miles to the eaſtward of Badagree, to cut off all communication with Lagos. Many priſoners were taken by thoſe canoes, which the Dahomans allowed the people of Lagos to *eat*, according to the country phraſe; which, in this inſtance, means, to convert to their own uſe. This weakened the enemy, and at the ſame time ſecured the intereſt of Lagos.

The

The Badagrees, thus abandoned by all their neighbours, and cut off from the poſſibility of obtaining ſupplies by land or water, reſolved to make a deſperate puſh, and ſell their liberty and lives as dear as poſſible. A day was fixed to attack the Dahoman camp, and the plan was concerted with ſuch ſecrecy and adroitneſs, that the deſign was put in execution before it was diſcovered.

A variety of circumſtances concurred to favour this bold enterprize. Many days had elapſed ſince the Dahomans had formed their camp, during which time no hoſtilities had been committed by either party. A relaxation of diſcipline had prevailed among the troops, and the centinels had become remiſs in their duty. The Agaow had retired a conſiderable way down the river, in the night previous to the attack, in order to perform ſome religious ceremonies, in compliance with an injunction that had been laid upon him by Adahoonzou. During the general's abſence, which was to have been three days, the command devolved on *Queenooh*.

In this ſituation, at the dawn of day, the Badagrees, in three diviſions, commanded by Prince Davee, and his generals, the Oclah and Poſſu, ruſhed upon the Dahomans, ſword in hand, ſet fire to their camp, killed a great number, and made many priſoners. The conſternation and diſorder occaſioned by this ſudden and unexpected attack, muſt have produced a total defeat, had it not been for the coolneſs and preſence of mind with which Queenooh rallied his panic-ſtruck troops, and made a ſtand. Oclah's diviſion appearing to be the moſt vulnerable, was immediately encountered by this brave Dahoman chief, who, perceiving that their

their leader charged in his hammock, directed his men to take a good aim at that object. The blood ſoon appearing through the hammock, the men who carried Oclah, threw him down, and the whole diviſion immediately betook themſelves to flight.

At this inſtant the Agaow arrived, reſumed the command, and was quickly in poſſeſſion of Davee's head. This news no ſooner reached the Poſſu, than he made a precipitate retreat, with five wounds in his body. The fortune of the day being now changed in favour of the Dahomans, the few men who had been left to guard the town of Badagree, together with the women and children, made their eſcape in canoes, and fell down the river towards Lagos; ſo that no more than two hundred fell into the hands of the Dahomans. But great was the carnage in the field of battle, the Agaow giving no quarter, till the Badagrees were reduced to a handful. After this engagement, ſix thouſand heads were ſold to the King of Dahomy by his ſoldiers.

Immediately after this deciſive victory, the Agaow diſpatched the Poſſu in purſuit of the fugitive women. On the following day he overtook them; upon which they called out to him, that they belonged to Dahomy. While the Poſſu was ſpeaking to them, he was joined by the Phuſſuppo, who had been ſent by the Agaow to ſupport him. Upon a conſultation held by the two chiefs, it was determined, by the Phuſſuppo's advice, to return to head quarters, the women promiſing to follow.

It does not appear what was the Phuſſuppo's reaſon for giving this advice, and ſo eaſily relinquiſhing ſuch a conſiderable prize:

but it is certain the Agaow received the news with rage and indignation; yet, as he had frequently witneſſed the courage of thoſe two officers, who ranked next to himſelf in the army, he judged it prudent to overlook their late conduct, and ſtifle his reſentment, not chooſing to bring them into a ſcrape with the King.

The women arriving at a town in the neighbourhood of Lagos, were adviſed by the King of that territory to remain there; for if they ſhould proceed farther, he ſhould be under the neceſſity of ſelling them, or of delivering them up to Dahomy. This piece of commendable moderation in the King of Lagos, who might have appropriated the poor fugitives to himſelf, delivered them from their fears, and they continued to reſide there.

Whilſt the Poſſu and Phuſſupo were in queſt of the women, the Agaow was employed in collecting the heads of the ſlain, and in ſecuring the ſlaves on the field of battle, where he waited the return of the two generals, that they might accompany him to the town of Badagree, in order to ſeize the booty that might be found there. Five days had elapſed ſince the evacuation of the town, in which interval the Ardrahs had poſſeſſed themſelves of moſt of the plunder, which they had tranſported, by means of their large canoes, and hid in the neighbouring ſalt works and ſwamps; ſo that the Dahomans got but little booty in the late bloody conflict, except a few priſoners, and the heads of thoſe who had fallen in the battle.

The

The moſt diſtinguiſhed of the priſoners were ſent by the Agaow to Adahoonzou, with a meſſage, intimating, that he waited for orders. The King ſoon returned an anſwer, inſtructing him to make the Ardras paddle the army acroſs the river, and to purſue his route homewards by the beach. The reaſon for this manœuvre was for ſome time kept a ſecret; but it was afterwards known that the King of Eyeo, expecting the Agaow's return by the ſame path in which his meſſengers had conducted the army to Badagree, had ſent a ſtrong force to intercept him, and bring the Dahomans, with all their plunder, to Eyeo. The meſſengers, therefore, who had hitherto been their conductors, were extremely aſtoniſhed when the Agaow diſmiſſed them, and bid them make the beſt of their way homewards.

The Agaow and his troops, after this, were once more ferried over to the beach, by the Ardrahs, who there left them, in order to ſecure their plunder. They were ſtill ſuſpected of treachery by Adahoonzou; but every man in Dahomy was forbid, at his peril, to ſpeak diſreſpectfully of them, for reaſons which will appear in the ſequel.

The Dahoman army having marched along the beach, till they got into the territories of Ardrah, were invited to halt, and partake of a repaſt, conſiſting of bullocks, hogs and ſheep, which had been provided, by order of the King of that country, who likewiſe beſtowed ſome preſents on the Agaow, and the reſt of the Dahoman chiefs.

It was at this place that the Phuſſupo recollected the advice which he had given to the Poſſu, reſpecting the Badagree women;

in conſequence, probably, of ſome expreſſions let fall by the Agaow on the occaſion; for he had ſent a meſſage to that general, antecedent to his return to head-quarters, importing, "That he ſhould not give the King nor the Agaow the trouble "of enquiring into a matter which was too late to be remedied. "He had given his advice without malice, or any ſiniſter in- "tentions, which, ſince it was likely to produce diſagreeable "conſequences, his return home might be inconvenient both "to himſelf and to the Poſſu—that he took the whole blame "upon himſelf; and as the Poſſu had no ſhare in it, he truſted "he ſhould be acquitted."

Theſe reflections prevailed with him to take the fatal reſolution of making away with himſelf, which he effected on the morning of the army's departure from Porto-Novo beach, by applying the muzzle of a loaded piſtol to his mouth. Thus fell the laſt and oldeſt of Ahadee's generals. His death was much regretted by the King, who declared, that if he had returned, after ſuch a glorious war, he ſhould have received him kindly. The Poſſu was not put to the neceſſity of making any defence.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Rejoicings for the late victory—Palace adorned with the ſkulls of the vanquiſhed—Barbarous maſſacre of priſoners—Conqueſt of Wemey.

GREAT rejoicings followed this conqueſt. Adahoonzou and his Caboceers danced round the palace for ſeveral ſucceſſive days; a profuſion of victuals was expended in feaſting; and a vaſt quantity of brandy was conſumed; while the heads of the vanquiſhed Badagrees were daily exhibited, for the gratification of the aſtoniſhed multitude.

Not contented with diſplaying his barbarous trophies at Calmina, the King's ſavage vanity led him to believe that the participation of ſuch a ſplendid ſpectacle would be acceptable to the Europeans. *Topah,* accompanied by the chief eunuch, and a magnificent retinue, was ſent down to the forts at Grigwhee, with a number of the heads, attended by drums beating, and colours flying. This officer met with a very cold reception, the governors refuſing to ſalute him, or to give his people any thing to drink. This piece of diſreſpect was extremely mortifying to the King.

1785. At the ſucceeding Cuſtoms, the ſinging-men had a fine opportunity of flattering the vain-glorious monarch. Badagree was no longer a diſagreeable theme. The air reſounded with the notable exploits performed by the victorious army; and Echo,

Echo, from the adjacent woods, reverberated the * *ſtrong names* of the *Male Oyſter*, till hoarſeneſs and fatigue overpowered the vocal band. The officers and ſoldiers were liberally rewarded, by the diſtribution of cowries and cloth; and the ſkulls of the vanquiſhed enemy were ordered to be applied to the decoration of the royal walls.

The perſon, to whom the management of this buſineſs had been committed, having neglected to make a proper calculation of his materials, had proceeded too far in the work, when he found that there would not be a ſufficient number of ſkulls to adorn the whole palace. He therefore requeſted permiſſion to begin the work anew, that he might, by placing them farther apart, complete the deſign in a regular manner. But the King would by no means give his conſent to this propoſal, obſerving, "That he ſhould ſoon find a ſufficient quantity of "Badagree heads to render the plan perfectly uniform."

The operators, therefore, proceeded with the work till the ſkulls were all expended, when the defective part of the walls was meaſured, and a calculation made, by which it appeared, that *one hundred and twenty-ſeven* was the number wanted to finiſh this extraordinary embelliſhment. The priſons, where the wretched captives had been confined, were accordingly thrown open, and the requiſite number of devoted victims dragged forth, to be ſlaughtered in cold blood, for this helliſh purpoſe. Previous to their execution, they were informed that the heads brought home by the Agaow had not been found ſufficient

* A phraſe, according to the Dahoman idiom, meaning his titles and exploits.

Plate VI.

ſufficient to garniſh the palace, and that theirs were required to ſupply the deficiency. This act of barbarity was greatly applauded by all preſent. *

It hath been already obſerved, that the Dahomans had been duped by the Ardrahs, of which Adahoonzou was not inſenſible. He had long meditated a blow at the King of Ardrah, his relation; but as he had occaſion for his ſervices in theſe late expeditions, he had ſtifled his reſentment at his perfidious conduct, till a fit opportunity ſhould occur to throw off the maſk, and puniſh him as he deſerved.

There were ſtill ſeveral obſtacles to prevent the execution of the deſign which the King of Dahomy had formed againſt Ardrah; the moſt important of which was the friendſhip of the King of Eyeo with the latter, and the alliance of Wemey, a contiguous and reſpectable ſtate. Theſe obſtacles Adahoonzou did his endeavour to ſurmount, in order to accompliſh his deſign, without being very ſcrupulous about the means. He ſowed the ſeeds of diſſention between the allied ſtates of Wemey and Ardrah, ſo effectually as to produce a rupture, which would have been fatal to the latter, had not the forces of the former been repulſed by the cannon of Antonio Vaz, which turned the fortune of the day in favour of the Ardras; who, to prevent farther incurſions, fortified themſelves on the ſide of Wemey with a ſtrong clay wall and a moat.

1786.

* At this time there were ſix ſlave ſhips in the road of Whydah, a great ſcarcity of trade, and the price of a prime ſlave little ſhort of thirty pounds ſterling.

1786. Soon after this tranſaction, Wemey became obnoxious to the King of Eyeo, on account of ſome of his trading-men having been way-laid and robbed, by a party belonging to that ſtate. Upon this occaſion, the King of Eyeo begged that Adahoonzou might chaſtiſe them, as it was too far for him to ſend an army for that purpoſe. Nothing could be more acceptable to the King of Dahomy than this commiſſion, as it exactly accorded with his own views.

The people of Wemey, on the other hand, haſtened their own deſtruction, by ſending an imprudent challenge to Adahoonzou, and threatening, that if he did not attack Wemey, they ſhould march againſt Dahomy. Adahoonzou anſwered, in the ſame boaſting ſtrain, that he ſhould ſend his Agaow, with a ſupply of guns, powder, and iron,* for their uſe.

The Agaow having received orders to prepare for war, beat his drum, formed his camp, and ſummoned the whole Dahoman forces to repair to his ſtandard. Adahoonzou invited the Mahees to become his auxiliaries in this enterprize, promiſing that all the booty which they ſhould acquire ſhould be at their own diſpoſal. Accordingly, one hundred Caboceers from the different ſtates of Mahee, with their numerous adherents, joined the Dahoman army.

Thus ſtrongly reinforced, the Agaow inveſted Wemey in May 1786, and made himſelf maſter of it in November following, having met with very little oppoſition from the beſieged,

* Cut iron is uſed inſtead of lead ball.

ſieged, who, notwithſtanding their bragging meſſage, never ventured to try their ſtrength with him, but remained inactive, till at laſt, being reduced by hunger, they were obliged to ſurrender at diſcretion.

Although this was a bloodleſs conqueſt, a prodigious number of the miſerable captives were afterwards put to death; and of thoſe who were permitted to live, numbers were ſo emaciated with hunger, that they periſhed on the path, between Wemey and Calmina.

CHAP. IX.

Enterpriſe againſt Porto Novo—*Redemption of the* French *priſoners—Meſſage of diſapprobation from* Eyeo—*the* Tamegan *goes to* Alladah, *to make fetiſh—Expedition againſt the* Whydahs.

THE King of Dahomy was exceſſively elated with his late ſucceſs, and nothing but the want of Eyeo's permiſſion prevented him from attacking Ardrah, which now lay open before him. This permiſſion, it was ſaid, he had obtained, though in terms ſomewhat ambiguous; Eyeo having conſented that Adahoonzou might repel any inſult that might be offered by the King of Ardrah; but at the ſame time, ſtrictly forbidding

the commencement of hoſtilities, without leave firſt aſked and obtained.

The King of Dahomy having got this kind of half ſanction, did not fail to turn it to his own advantage. At this time there were no leſs than eleven French ſhips in the road of Porto Novo, the port of Ardrah; and the daily debarkation of a large quantity of merchandize, afforded a favourable opportunity of making a ſucceſsful excurſion to the beach; whilſt the jealouſy at ſeeing ſuch a number of ſhipping in a neighbouring port, and only one brig in Whydah road, was a freſh ſpur to the meditated enterpriſe.

In conſequence of ſecret orders, which had been given by Adahoonzou, the *Coke*, or ſecond Caboceer, at Grigwhee, accompanied by the *Cakaow*, the military officer who is ſtationed there, and about three hundred of the King's ſoldiers, ſtole out of town in the night, and on the ſecond morning afterwards, at the break of day, arrived on Porto Novo beach. Fourteen Frenchmen, one Portugueſe, and upwards of eighty canoemen from the Gold Coaſt, here fell into the hands of the Dahomans, without reſiſtance.

The Coke and the Cakaow returned with their priſoners, of whom they very well knew how to make the beſt advantage. They entered into treaty with the governor of the French fort at Grigwhee, for their ranſom, which at laſt was fixed at twenty-

twenty-ſix * ounces of cowries for each white officer or boat-ſwain of canoes, and twenty-four ounces for each ſailor and canoe-man; amounting in the whole to about *four thouſand and ſix hundred pounds ſterling*—a very handſome booty!

The captors accepted of Monſ. *Gourg*'s notes for the above-mentioned ſum, without ſcruple, as there had never been an inſtance in that country of a white man refuſing to honour his written obligations, ſo that they paſs as current with the natives as money. This gentleman, who had been an officer in the French ſervice, was admoniſhed not to comply ſo eaſily with the exorbitant demands of the Dahomans, but he would not be adviſed.

The priſoners being thus redeemed, were delivered up to Monſ. Gourg, the French governor; but upwards of thirty of the canoe-men died of the ſmall-pox, which then raged in the country, before they could be conveyed to the reſpective captains who had hired them on the Gold Coaſt.

It does not appear that the Dahomans found any other plunder on the beach, beſides the priſoners before mentioned; but it is certain that the King of Ardrah was highly irritated at this infraction of the alliance which had lately ſubſiſted between the two kingdoms. He immediately diſpatched ambaſſadors to the King of Eyeo, complaining of this unprovoked breach of friendſhip, which was followed by a meſſage from that Prince,

* Theſe are ounces in trade, or currency, equal to forty ſhillings each. An ounce in gold is reckoned at four pounds ſterling; vide ante, p. 134.

reprehending the conduct of Adahoonzou, in terms the moſt menacing and offenſive, forbidding him ever to think of a hoſtile viſit to Ardrah in future, and telling him, "That *Ardrah was "Eyeo's* callabaſh, out of which nobody ſhould be permited to eat "but himſelf.*"

The King of Dahomy was thunderſtruck at this meſſage, which, however, he durſt not reſent, but was obliged to appeaſe his irritated maſter, by dividing with him his late ill-gotten ſpoil.

Nor was this all: for ſo great was his dread of Eyeo's reſentment, that for many months afterwards, whenever any warlike preparations were made by that monarch, Adahoonzou was under the greateſt apprehenſions that the kingdom of Dahomy would feel the effects of his vengeance.

This impreſſion continued to diſturb the Dahomans for a conſiderable time afterwards; ſo that on the following year, 1787, when the King of Eyeo made ſome movements towards the Mahee country, Adahoonzou was ſo much alarmed, that he ſet all his people to work, to barricade and ſecure the halls of his different palaces, that he might, in caſe of an attack, have ſome places of ſecurity, in which he might hide himſelf.

The cloak of religion is often aſſumed to cover the moſt atrocious actions. While Adahoonzou was bending all his endea-

* The callabaſh, or gourd, is chiefly uſed in this country to ſerve up ſoup, and other food; though it ſerves alſo for other purpoſes, ſuch as bottles, drinking cups, and other utenſils. Some of them have been found to meaſure a yard in diameter. Theſe are converted into waſhing-tubs.

endeavours to extirpate the human race, he did not forget to ſolemnize the rites of ſuperſtition. His prime miniſter, the Tamegan, was ſent to *Alladah*, one of his palaces, not many miles from Grigwhee, with a *Gong-gong-beater*, many drums, a number of prieſts and attendants, to make *fetiſh*. The European governors, and captains of ſhips, took this opportunity to pay him a viſit, carrying each a ſmall preſent, and were moſt hoſpitably entertained by this old and reſpectable caboceer, who did every thing in his power to make the time of their ſtay agreeable.

About this time, many movements were made by the different generals of war; three of whom were ſent to Grigwhee, who, with the help of the town's people, went againſt the old Whydahs, and returned with the pitiful acquiſition of a few baſkets of ſalt.

Not long after this nugatory expedition, it was reported, that the people of Porto Novo were about to invade Grigwhee, with *Seſſu** at their head. This Caboceer, for his ſervices during the

* *Seſſu*, a man of a moroſe and avaricious temper, was a native and Caboceer of Ardrah. He had the management of the carriers, who tranſported the goods belonging to the ſhipping, from Porto Novo beach, acroſs the lakes, to the town of Ardrah. In the execution of this office, he committed ſuch extortions and abuſes, that the Engliſh and French captains conſpired againſt him; and, with the aſſiſtance of Antonio Vaz, his enemy, drove him out of Ardrah. After his expulſion, he ſettled in the vicinity of Badagree, with his numerous vaſſals and dependants; for he was powerful as well as rich. Having put himſelf under the protection of Badagree, and by means of his influence in the back country, and the obſtruction he gave to the traders going to Ardrah, by placing armed people in the paths, he actually contrived, for many years, to divert a conſiderable part of the trade of that place to his own town, and to Badagree.

the inveſtment of Badagree, had been promiſed the ſovereignty of that ſtate by Adahoonzou. But his aſſiſtance being no longer neceſſary after the conqueſt of that country, the promiſe had been forgotten, and Seſſu had taken poſſeſſion, without the King of Dahomy's permiſſion. This monarch did not think fit to diſturb the new ſelf-created Prince, on account of his precarious ſituation with reſpect to Eyeo; but finding that Seſſu was meditating a blow againſt the capital of Whydah, the moſt vigorous meaſures were taken to oppoſe him, which had the deſired effect; for the caboceer abandoned his projected enterpriſe.

1788. The Annual Cuſtoms were ſoon after celebrated in the uſual manner, a number of victims being immolated at the tombs of Adahoonzou's departed anceſtors. Upon this occaſion, he made a long ſpeech of acknowledgment to the European governors, for the attention they had paid to the Tamegan during his reſidence at Alladah.

CHAP. X.

Expedition to Croo-too-hoon-too—*An embaſſy from that Nation —Barbarous treatment of them by* Adahoonzou—*The Agaow attacks and vanquiſhes the* Ketoos.

THE Eyeo army was ſtill in the field; and the panic, occaſioned by the apprehenſion of a hoſtile viſit, continued to diſturb the

the Dahomans; ſo that no enterpriſe was thought of, till it was known that the Eyeos were on their march homewards, which happened a conſiderable time afterwards.

Upon this, Adahoonzou, on ſome affront, ſent out his army againſt a country called *Croo-too-hoon-too*. The van, which was commanded by the Poſſu, having on its march paſſed a narrow defile, was ſo vigorouſly attacked by the enemy, that this general was obliged to make a precipitate retreat, and endeavour to repaſs the defile, where the Agaow had arrived with the main body. This rencounter between the advancing and retreating troops, occaſioned ſo much confuſion and conſternation among the Dahomans, that if the Croo-too-hoon-toos had followed up their blow, not a ſingle * umbrella would have got back to Calmina. But theſe people had no other object than ſelf-defence, and therefore were ſatisfied with having repulſed and driven the invaders out of their territory.

On the return of the army, the Agaow complained bitterly of the Poſſu's conduct, to which he attributed the failure of the expedition; but the King was not diſpoſed to liſten to his repreſentations, to the prejudice of that officer.

Some months after this tranſaction, five of the Croo-too-hon-too Caboceers arrived in Dahomy, to pay homage to Adahoonzou, in the name of their country, ſaying, "That it was "but natural to ſtand on their defence, when attacked in their "own.

* The large umbrellas, carried over the heads of the Caboceers, are at the ſame time a defence againſt the ſun, and a mark of diſtinction.

" own houſes; that they were not conſcious of having given " any cauſe of umbrage to the King of Dahomy, and therefore " were much aſtoniſhed at the Agaow's viſit; that, as they " preferred peace to war, they were unwilling to contend with " ſuch a powerful monarch, but rather were deſirous of be- " coming his tributaries, and offering him a part of the pro- " ductions of their country."

Adahoonzou, apparently, received them in the moſt hoſpitable manner, treated them with all imaginable kindneſs, and diſmiſſed them with conſiderable preſents. On the day after their departure, the Agaow, in conſequence of having received ſecret orders for that purpoſe, followed them with ſo much caution, that they entertained no ſuſpicion of his being ſo near them. Two days after theſe Caboceers had reached their own country, and while the inhabitants repoſed in ſeeming tranquillity, the Agaow unexpectedly attacked their town, putting men, women, and children to the ſword.

After this enormous and unparalleled act of perfidy, he proceeded to rifle the houſes of the murdered, where he found, among other moveables, a variety of very curious dreſſes, made of the ſkins of ſuch animals as the country produces. Theſe were a very acceptable acquiſition to Adahoonzou, who, afterwards, at the Cuſtoms, exhibited them to the Europeans, except thoſe that were made of tigers ſkins; which animal, being the fetiſh, or deity, of the country, it would have been ſacrilege to have expoſed their ſkins to public view.

At

At the time when theſe ſpoils were ſhewn to the white men, by the King himſelf, while he ſtood at the gate of his palace, called **Gree ma zon baw*, Adahoonzou remarked, "That this "was but a ſmall war; but that he was about to make a truly "great one, which they ſhould ſoon hear of."

1789. He was as good as his word; for the Cuſtomas were ſcarcely finiſhed, when he took upon truſt all the guns and powder which could be found among the ſhipping, aſſembled all his ſubjects, able to bear arms, and gave out, that he was going to oppoſe the *Popoes*, who had threatened to invade Whydah; telling the European governors, that they ſhould ſee him in perſon at Grigwhee.

Adahoonzou left his own houſe, and made a camp ſeparate from that of the army; the Tamegan and the Mayhou had likewiſe theirs; and ſo had the Yavougah, the Coke, and the Cakaow, which three laſt-mentioned Caboceers had been called up from Grigwhee, their uſual ſtation, to join the grand army.

As the communication with Popo was at that time open, and there appeared no hoſtile preparations on that ſide, it was impoſſible to diſcover the intended deſtination of this formidable army. The ſecret at laſt was divulged, and it was known that the object of this expedition was *Ketoo*, the country where the fine red cotton cloths are manufactured.

* You do not give a goat a plantation to ſow corn in.

The town of Ketoo being ſurrounded by a large moat and a double wall, the inhabitants at firſt bid defiance to the Agaow, telling him from the walls, that the large gate was open for his reception. This bravado was diſregarded by the general, who contented himſelf, for the preſent, to pillage the neighbouring plantations. In the mean time, his ſuccours arriving, he collected all his force, and prepared for a general aſſault; but before he proceeded to ſtorm the town, he made a feint of retreating, which drew the enemy without the walls, to engage; upon which he attacked them with dreadful carnage, killing or taking the greateſt part of the beſieged.

Two thouſand priſoners, and a great number of heads, were the firſt fruit of this victory. The captives were carried in triumph to Dahomy, where nine-tenths of them were butchered in cold blood; two hundred only being reſerved for ſale.

This victory was followed, as uſual, by feaſting and rejoicing; and a ſlave apiece was given to the European governors at Grigwhee, as an acknowledgment for the preparations they had made, to oppoſe the threatened invaſion of the Popoes.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Death of Adahoonzou—*King's Devil killed—Maſſacre of priſoners—and of the King's women.*

THE conqueſt of Ketoo was the laſt remarkable tranſaction that happened during the reign of Adahoonzou. The time drew nigh that was to rid the earth of this ſcourge of the human race. Meſſages had been frequently brought from the King to the European governors, for ſome time after the Ketoo victory; but now it was a month ſince any meſſenger had arrived at Grigwhee, either from the King or his Caboceers. A certain gloom was apparent over the whole Dahoman empire. A myſterious ſilence prevailed. Every countenance betrayed a ſecret which the tongue durſt not reveal. The truth at laſt came out—Adahoonzou *was dead of the ſmall-pox!*

This diſorder had not been attended with any unfavourable ſymptoms; but the King, impatient under confinement, was deſirous to convince his people that all was well with him. The * *Gong-gong-beater* had been commanded to ſummon all his ſubjects to the King's door, in order to ſee him; and he was actually on his way, from an inner apartment to the gate, accompanied by ſome of his women, when he was ſeized with a giddineſs, fell down, and expired. This happened on the 17th of April, 1789.

* This officer, who carries a rude kind of hand-bell in his left hand, made of hammered iron, and a ſtick, ſomewhat like a drum-ſtick, in his right, is the public herald or crier, upon all occaſions.

The women retired; the Tamegan made a ſpeech to thoſe who were aſſembled at the gate, informing them, "That the "King had intended to play a little in public, but was pre- "vented by ſome particular buſineſs; that he deſigned, how- "ever, very ſhortly to ſee his people, when he would put in "execution his purpoſe of diverting them."

The miniſter had ſcarcely concluded this ſhort addreſs, when a loud ſhriek was heard from within the palace. This was quickly communicated from Agoonah, where the King then lay, to Calmina and Pahou. The whole kingdom was immediately in an uproar, the people beating their breaſts, tumbling down, and exhibiting ſuch marks of frenzy, that one would have thought the whole country had been ſeized with the ſame diſorder. Confuſion and anarchy, as uſual on ſuch occaſions, univerſally prevailed; every body was armed, and frequent rob- beries were committed.

The Caboceers, nevertheleſs, attended to the main buſineſs, which was the conveyance of the corpſe to Abomey. They had it on the way three hours after the breath departed. The man called the *King's Devil*, was killed on the path, between Agoonah and Dawee; and on the arrival of the corpſe at the gate of Dahomy-houſe, at Abomey, *ſixty-eight men* (all Ketoos) were maſſacred, before it was carried into the houſe.

The butchery now began among the women, who immedi- ately proceeded to deſtroy one another; and this ſcene continued for two days and a half. Human nature ſhrinks at the recital of ſuch horrible facts. The ſimple narration is ſufficiently ſhocking, without the detail of the particular circumſtances that

that marked this bloody ſcene. Suffice it to obſerve, that *five hundred and ninety-five* women were murdered by their companions on this occaſion, and ſent, according to the notion that prevails in this unhappy country, to attend Adahoonzou in the other world.

CHAP. XII.

Earthquake at Abomey—*Reflections on* Adahoonzou's *conduct*—*Aſcendancy of* Eyeo—*Puniſhment of* Pauſſie *and her huſband.*

BEFORE we begin the life of the new monarch, it may not, perhaps, be amiſs to relate ſome farther particulars that occurred during Adahoonzou's reign, which could not hitherto be conveniently introduced, without interrupting the connexion of the foregoing hiſtory.

Upon the return of the Agaow from the expedition againſt Croo-too-hoon too, the Eyeo meſſengers being then at Calmina, the King did not chooſe to communicate to them the ſucceſs of his arms, leſt they ſhould make a demand of the ſpoil for the uſe of their maſter. For it had been uſual for them, on the eve of the return of the Dahomans from any victory, to covet every thing they ſaw in Dahomy that was curious or valuable. The King, therefore, had directed the Agaow to proceed to Abomey, and depoſit his plunder there; and in the mean time Adahoonzou haſtened to diſmiſs the Eyeo ambaſſadors.

When

When the King afterwards went to Abomey, and had ſeated himſelf amidſt his Caboceers, to examine the booty, they were exceedingly alarmed by an uncommon motion of the earth, which ſhook the ſtools on which they ſat, and threw down a part of the walls of the palace. It was the ſhock of an earthquake, which was felt, not only at Abomey, but extended to Agoonah, Calmina, and ſeveral of the neighbouring villages.

As no event of this nature had been handed down by tradition, the Dahomans applied to the Europeans for an explication of this extraordinary phænomenon. With the view of bringing about a reformation in the conduct of Adahoonzou, they informed him, that the Almighty took this method of ſignifying his diſpleaſure at the crimes committed by mortals; and that it was not uncommon, upon certain occaſions, for the earth to open and ſwallow up towns, and even whole provinces, with all their inhabitants. It does not, however, appear that this repreſentation produced any alteration in the King's behaviour.

Although Adahoonzou poſſeſſed a great ſhare of perſonal courage, he appears to have been remarkably deficient in every other endowment requiſite for the government of a great kingdom. His bravery, and enterpriſing ſpirit, ſerved only to point him out as the fit engine for accompliſhing the wiſhes of his more politic and formidable neighbour and maſter, the King of Eyeo.

This remark will account for the conqueſts which the King of Dahomy had been permitted to make, without the interruption

tion or interference of Eyeo. Ardrah had been the intermediate tool, by whoſe inſtigation Adahoonzou had been prompted to haraſs his neighbours; and Eyeo got the major part of the ſpoil that had been acquired by Adahoonzou's victories.

The King of Dahomy was made to believe, that the whole trade of the Europeans was to center at Whydah, and that all the ſlaves who were brought to Ardrah, ſhould be ſent to Grigwhee for ſale. This turned out to be a ſcandalous impoſition: for the King of Ardrah ſoon ſtopped all communication with Whydah. The meſſengers from Porto Novo * were no longer ſeen at the King of Dahomy's Cuſtoms; and the Dahoman traders, who had been accuſtomed to viſit Ardrah, were no more allowed that liberty.

The excurſion of the Dahomans to Porto Novo beach, therefore, is not to be wondered at; and Ardrah moſt probably would have received a more ſevere chaſtiſement, but for the interference of Eyeo.

Adahoonzou was extremely exaſperated at having been made the dupe of the people of Ardrah, and left no method untried to ſet Eyeo againſt them; but they were too rich, and conſtantly defeated Dahomy's deſigns, by heaping a profuſion of preſents on the King of Eyeo. Porto Novo road was ſeldom without ſeven or eight large French ſhips, and the richeſt European commodities were continually paſſing from thence, to be preſented to the King of Eyeo, a very cloſe-fiſted and ſhrewd monarch.

Contrary

* The ſea-port of Ardrah.

Contrary to the uſage of his predeceſſors, Adahoonzou bore very hard on his ſubjects, who had ſettled under the different European forts. When any **palaver* obliged them to repair to Dahomy, they were ſure to be caſt, and loſe their liberty or lives: for if they happened to elude the ſtroke of the ſcimitar, they were ſold, and the amount carried to the King.

The following anecdote will ſerve as a ſpecimen of the manner in which Adahoonzou ſerved delinquents of this kind. A woman named *Pauſſie*, who lived under the protection of the French fort, and had acquired conſiderable property by trade, to the amount of ſeventy ſlaves, and upwards, had inſinuated herſelf into the good graces of Monſ. *Olivier*, the former governor of the French fort at Grigwhee, by her dexterity in her profeſſion.

This woman uſed to follow her huſband, who was alſo a conſiderable trader, to Dahomy, where ſhe made many friends, and among others, ſome of the Eyeo nation. Olivier, who was poſſeſſed of ſome valuable coral, which he could not diſpoſe of at Grigwhee, for the price it merited, had employed Pauſſie to ſell it for him; and ſhe accordingly had diſpoſed of it to the Eyeo meſſengers, at an extravagant price.

It had been likewiſe the practice of this woman to ſell iron † bars; which, for the convenience of concealment, were cut into pieces

* From the Portugueſe word *palabra*, a *word*; but uſed for *diſpute* or *lawſuit*.

† Iron, guns, powder, and coral, are not permitted to be ſold to any body but the King, or to his miniſters, for him.

pieces of the neceſſary length for hoes, and other implements of agriculture; and which iron had likewiſe been uſually furniſhed by Monſ. Olivier.

The Eyeo meſſengers having carried the coral to their own country, it ſome how fell into the hands of their King, and of conſequence produced an enquiry, how it had been obtained. Now it ſeems, coral had formed no part of the tribute which had lately been paid by the King of Dahomy; upon the plea, that for a long while there had been none to be found in the country, as there had been no ſhips in Whydah road for a conſiderable time.

The King of Eyeo ſent a ſpecial meſſenger to the Dahoman Monarch, to reprehend him for the ſuppoſed ſubterfuge, and to ſhew him the coral which had been purchaſed in his country; informing him at the ſame time, that Adahoonzou knew he held his dominions no longer than whilſt he regularly paid his tribute; and when he neglected that, Dahomy belonged to Eyeo.

This meſſage was very mortifying to Adahoonzou; who reſolved to make a ſevere example of thoſe who had been the occaſion of it. A ſtrict enquiry was immediately ſet on foot; and the diſpoſer of the coral, together with her huſband, were ſoon apprehended. The latter was ſold, and died on board a ſhip in Whydah road. The woman was carried up to Dahomy, where, it was ſaid by ſome, that ſhe had been chopped in pieces; though others affirmed, that the King of Eyeo had interfered, and ſaved her life.

Eight days had elapſed before theſe circumſtances became public; but Mr. Abſon, who had received intelligence of Pauſſie's fate ſomewhat earlier, adviſed Monſ. Olivier to ſecure her property. To this prudent advice he lent a deaf ear, which he quickly repented; for ſoon afterwards the Yavougah, and other officers, with a King's meſſenger at their head, and followed by a number of attendants armed, entered the hall in the French fort, and kiſſing the floor, as is uſual when charged with King's meſſage, ſaid, "That a woman, named Pauſſie, "belonging to the French fort, had got into the King's *palaver*;* "that he hoped Monſ. Olivier would not countenance her be- "haviour, by making any reſiſtance to the execution of his "commiſſion, which was, to level her houſe with the ground, "and to ſeize cowries, ſlaves, and every thing which he might "find, and carry them to the King."

The old governor reſented this outrage, ſo contrary to the civility and reſpect which was due, and always had been paid, to the Europeans; and ſaid, that he would ſooner periſh in the ruins of the fort, than ſubmit to ſuch a groſs indignity. The Yavougah, however, perſiſted in putting the royal orders into execution. Olivier loaded his guns, and ordered the matches to be lighted; but he did not think proper to proceed to extremities. Pauſſie's effects, therefore, were all ſeized, and carried to Dahomy; her debtors were obliged to pay whatever was due to her; but her creditors demands againſt her were ſcouted.

CHAP.

* Was under the King's proſecution.

CHAP. XIII.

Inſtances of ſevere puniſhment—The King becomes trader—Deſtructive conſequences of his interference.

ALTHOUGH the King of Dahomy's women be guarded with eaſtern jealouſy, and the violators of the royal bed ſeldom eſcape puniſhment; yet intrigues of this kind, in Adahoonzou's reign, had not been uncommon. It happened during that epocha, that a dangerous female conſpiracy had been formed againſt the liberties of the people. Some of the ladies of the ſeraglio, who bore evident marks of gallantry, having been queſtioned concerning their paramours, named upwards of *one hundred and fifty* men, belonging to ſome villages in the neighbourhood of Calmina. Theſe were all ſold, although moſt of them were afterwards found to have been innocent, by the confeſſion of a woman who diſcovered the plot.

During the cuſtomary anniverſary that happened previous to the King's death, one of the ſilver ornaments, which had been preſerved ſince the time of *Weebaigah*, third King of Dahomy, was miſſing. After a moſt rigid ſearch, it was found in the hands of one of the King's ſmiths, to whom it had been delivered by a captain, and a boy belonging to the Sawgan. Theſe two people, who had cut the ſilver to pieces, for the purpoſe of of being made into rings, were immediately ſeized, and carried from the King's gate to the market-place, preceded by the King's Gong-gong-beater, who made a ſpeech to the populace, purporting, " That the King was about to make the priſoners

" keepers of his treaſure, while he celebrated the memory of " his anceſtors." Upon which they were knocked down, their bellies opened, and filled with ſalt, in the preſence of all the Caboceers and vaſſals, who had been ſummoned together to attend this cruel execution.

Notwithſtanding this ſevere puniſhment, ſome of the people were daring enough to ſteal ſeveral of the ſtrings of cowries, with which the King had taken a fancy to ornament his different palaces. Some of the perpetrators being diſcovered, were obliged to make atonement at the expence of their lives.

Upon another occaſion, a man, who had been Adahoonzou's ſervant, during his minority, in his father's life time, became the object of his vengeance. This man had a connexion with one of the King's women, and was detected making his eſcape with her. The woman was carried back to the palace, and the man impriſoned in the Mayhou's houſe. One day, ſoon after, the King came out in a great hurry, attended only by two ſoldiers, and walking to the Mayhou's houſe, he ordered the delinquent to be brought forth, and cut to pieces in his preſence.

Many inſtances of a ſimilar kind might be produced; but the foregoing will ſuffice to ſhew the reader the vaſt diſproportion between crimes and puniſhments in this unhappy country: which is not to be wondered at, when it is conſidered how many human creatures have been put to death during this bloody reign, without having committed *any* crime at all.

Having

Having given ſome ſpecimens of Adahoonzou's adminiſtration of juſtice, let us take notice of the effects produced by his interference in commerce.

In conſequence of the failure of ſome of his expeditions, the King took it into his head, that it was owing to the intrigues of *aliens* reſiding in his dominions. He therefore ordered the Gong-gong to be beat; giving warning to all ſtrangers, Eyeos excepted, immediately to quit the kingdom: alledging, that whenever any expedition was on foot, his deſigns were by them communicated to the enemy; ſo that the Agaow had been rarely ſucceſsful, and often came off with hard blows.

To make amends for his bad ſucceſs in war, he was reſolved to try the effect of a monopoly in trade; a profeſſion which his anceſtors had conſidered as ignoble, and which they had never put in practice, except through the medium of their Caboceers.

Accordingly, he iſſued a proclamation, that no trader ſhould, at any market, pay more than thirty-two * *cabeſſes* of cowries for a man, and twenty-ſix cabeſſes for a woman, ſlave. In conſequence of which decree, he himſelf commenced trader, and began to buy ſlaves on his own account at thoſe prices: ſetting his men to watch the traders, and confiſcate their ſlaves and themſelves, if vendible, for every breach of his ordinance; and if the traders ſo offending ſhould not be ſaleable, they were to be beheaded.

The

* A cabeſs, cabeça, or head of cowries, is ten ſhillings ſterling. V. p. 135.

The pretext for theſe *wiſe* regulations was, that the treaſure might be kept in his own country, and that it might not go to enrich the Mahees and *Nagoes*. This new edict was very much approved of by a certain deſcription of people, who had nothing to loſe; but the real traders ſaid, all was going to perdition. For they remarked, that the Mahees, Nagoes, and other inland merchants, would naturally ſeek other channels for their commerce, and that they would come no more through the Dahoman dominions. It turned out exactly as they had predicted: the trade flowing on one ſide to Wemey, for the Porto Novo market; and on the other, to *Peſhie*, for the Popo and Quitta markets; at which places the traders might freely buy guns, powder, and iron; articles forbidden to be dealt in by ſtrangers in Dahomy; except the latter, when manufactured into implements of huſbandry.

All this did not open Adahoonzou's eyes; ſo that the Agaow was frequently ſent out to lay in ambuſh, and catch ſuch traders, with their ſlaves, as he could lay his hands on: ſometimes he was ſucceſsful, but oftener got nothing.

The King's avarice did not ſtop here; for having experienced the ſweets of gain, thus cheaply acquired, he ordained, that every trader, poſſeſſing two ſlaves, ſhould relinquiſh one, and the beſt of them, to him; and if three, two were to be the King's, he paying the price which himſelf had fixed, in *ſtrung* cowries, at the gate of the palace. For this purpoſe, his women were kept conſtantly employed ſtringing them; in the execution of which, they took care that there ſhould be a deficiency of from three

three to ſix per *ſtring. Nor was the trader allowed any conſideration whatever for his trouble, expences, or the duties he had been obliged to diſburſe on the journey.

All this cauſed general murmurings and diſcontent; many bankruptcies enſued; and ſome conſiderable traders, who had poſſeſſed property to the value of ſixty or ſeventy ſlaves, were reduced to beggary. Some bore this reverſe of fortune with ſurpriſing magnanimity; others ſeeing all go to deſtruction, ſickened, and died, as commerce had done before them.

To fill up the meaſure of oppreſſion, under which his commercial ſubjects laboured, the King impoſed additional duties, which, for a while, gave the revenue a flouriſhing appearance; but, like the laſt efforts of an expiring man, this tranſitory deluſion quickly vaniſhed.

Nobody, however, durſt ſpeak out. Hints, indeed, had often reached the royal ear; but they were diſregarded. The Caboceers, in a body, ventured to remonſtrate; but they were accuſed of a conſpiracy againſt the King's life; in conſequence of which, a *palaver* aroſe, that took upwards of two months to ſettle. As the laſt reſource, the European governors were requeſted to repreſent to the King, the pernicious conſequences of his meaſures. Upon their interference, he promiſed to relieve

* Forty cowries make one ſtring, if looſe; 39, when ſtrung: the 40th being allowed for the piercing and ſtringing. V. Introduction.

relieve his ſubjects, but failed in the performance. In ſhort, Whydah, which had always been a precarious port of trade ſince its conqueſt by Trudo, was for ſome years without any trade at all.

CHAP. XIV.

Adahoonzou's *ſpeech, upon hearing what had paſſed in* England *upon the ſubject of the Slave-trade.*

AS a proof that Adahoonzou was not at a loſs for arguments to defend the conduct of himſelf and his predeceſſors, when neceſſary, we ſhall cloſe that Prince's hiſtory, with the heads of a ſpeech, made by him upon an occaſion which is about to be taken notice of, and which took up *two hours* in the delivery; for the Dahomans are extremely verboſe.* Governor † Abſon having taken an opportunity of communicating to Adahoonzou ſome of the particulars reſpecting the Slave-trade, which had become the ſubject of converſation, and parliamentary enquiry, in

* If Mr. Abſon ſuppoſes long ſpeeches are confined to Europe and Africa, he is miſtaken: the Braſilians were famous for this ſpecies of rhetoric long ago. When they wiſhed to excite the people to war, their Eldermen, from their hammocks, harangued their auditors, on the virtues and wrongs of their anceſtors, for *ſix* hours together. *Purchas's Pilgrims*, 1036.

† The preſent Governor of William's Fort, who has reſided there ſince 1766, and is well acquainted with the language.

in this country; and having carried with him ſome of the pamphlets for and againſt the abolition of that traffick, which he read to him, in Adahoonzou's native language; the King liſtened with great attention; and though buſineſs ſeveral times broke in upon the narration, ſtill requeſted Mr. Abſon, after every interruption, to proceed. When the whole was finiſhed, the King ſpoke as follows:

"I admire the reaſoning of the white men; but, with all "their ſenſe, it does not appear that they have thoroughly "ſtudied the nature of the blacks, whoſe diſpoſition differs as "much from that of the whites, as their colour. The ſame "Great Being formed both; and ſince it hath ſeemed conve-"nient for him to diſtinguiſh mankind by oppoſite complec-"tions, it is a fair concluſion to preſume, that there may be as "great a diſagreement in the qualities of their minds. There "is likewiſe a remarkable difference between the countries "which we inhabit. You, Engliſhmen, for inſtance, as I have "been informed, are ſurrounded by the ocean, and, by this ſitua-"tion, ſeem intended to hold communication with the whole "world, which you do by means of your ſhips; whilſt we Daho-"mans, being placed on a large continent, and hemmed in "amidſt a variety of other people, of the ſame complexion, but "ſpeaking different languages, are obliged, by the ſharpneſs of "our ſwords, to defend ourſelves from their incurſions, and "puniſh the depredations they make on us. Such conduct in "them is productive of inceſſant wars. Your countrymen, "therefore, who alledge that we go to war for the purpoſe of "ſupplying your ſhips with ſlaves, are groſsly miſtaken.

" You think you can work a reformation, as you call it, in " the manners of the blacks; but you ought to conſider the " diſproportion between the magnitude of the two countries; and " then you would ſoon be convinced of the difficulties that muſt " be ſurmounted, to change the ſyſtem of ſuch a vaſt country " as this. We know you are a brave people, and that you " might bring over a great many of the blacks to your opinions, " by the points of your bayonets; but to effect this, a great " many muſt be put to death, and numerous cruelties muſt be " committed, which we do not find to have been the practice " of the whites: beſides, that this would militate againſt " the very principle which is profeſſed by thoſe who wiſh to " bring about a reformation.

" In the name of my anceſtors and myſelf I aver, that no " Dahoman man ever embarked in war merely for the ſake of " procuring wherewithal to purchaſe your commodities. I, " who have not been long maſter of this country, have, without " thinking of the market, killed many thouſands, and I ſhall " kill many thouſands more. When policy or juſtice requires " that men be put to death, neither ſilk, nor coral, nor brandy, " nor cowries, can be accepted as ſubſtitutes for the blood that " ought to be ſpilt for example ſake. Beſides, if white men " chuſe to remain at home, and no longer viſit this country " for the ſame purpoſe that has uſually brought them hither, " will black men ceaſe to make war? I anſwer, by no " means. And if there be no ſhips to receive their captives, " what will become of them? I anſwer for you, they will be " put to death. Perhaps you may aſk, how will the blacks " be furniſhed with guns and powder? I reply by another queſ-

" tion,

" tion; had we not clubs, and bows, and arrows, before we " knew white men? Did you not ſee me make Cuſtom for " Weebaigah, the third King of Dahomy? And did you " not obſerve, on the day ſuch ceremony was performing, " that I carried a bow in my hand, and a quiver filled with " arrows, on my back? Theſe were emblems of the times, " when, with ſuch weapons, that brave anceſtor fought and " conquered all his neighbours. God made war for all the " world; and every kingdom, large or ſmall, has practiſed it " more or leſs, though perhaps in a manner unlike, and upon " different principles. Did Weebaigah ſell ſlaves? No; his pri- " ſoners were all killed to a man. What elſe could he have " done with them? Was he to let them remain in his country, " to cut the throats of his ſubjects? This would have been " wretched policy indeed, which, had it been adopted, the " Dahoman name would have long ago been extinguiſhed, " inſtead of becoming, as it is at this day, the terror of " ſurrounding nations. What hurts me moſt is, that ſome " of your people have maliciouſly repreſented us in books, which " never die, alledging, that we ſell our wives and children, " for the ſake of procuring a few kegs of brandy. No; we are " ſhamefully belied; and I hope you will contradict, from my " mouth, the ſcandalous ſtories that have been propagated; " and tell poſterity that we have been abuſed. We do, indeed, " ſell to the white men a part of our priſoners, and we have a " right ſo to do. Are not all priſoners at the diſpoſal of their " captors? And are we to blame, if we ſend delinquents to a " far country? I have been told, you do the ſame. If you " want no more ſlaves from us, why cannot you be ingenuous, " and tell the plain truth; ſaying, that the ſlaves you have

" already purchaſed, are ſufficient for the country for which you " bought them; or that the artiſts, who uſed to make fine " things, are all dead, without having taught any body to " make more? But for a parcel of men with long heads, to " ſit down in England, and frame laws for us, and pretend to " dictate how we are to live, of whom they know nothing, " never having been in a black man's country during the whole " courſe of their lives, is to me ſomewhat extraordinary. No " doubt, they muſt have been biaſſed by the report of ſome one " who has had to do with us; who, for want of a due knowledge " of the treatment of ſlaves, found that they died on his hands, " and that his money was loſt; and ſeeing others thrive by the " traffic, he, envious of their good luck, has vilified both black " and white traders.

" You have ſeen me kill many men at the Cuſtoms; and " you have often obſerved delinquents at Grigwhee, and others " of my provinces, tied, and ſent up to me. I kill them; but " do I ever inſiſt on being paid for them? Some heads I order " to be placed at my door; others to be ſtrewed about the " market-place, that people may ſtumble upon them when " they little expect ſuch a ſight. This gives a grandeur to my " Cuſtoms, far beyond the diſplay of fine things which I buy. " This makes my enemies fear me, and gives me ſuch a name " in the **buſh*. Beſides, if I ſhould neglect this indiſpenſible " duty, would my anceſtors ſuffer me to live? Would they not " trouble me day and night, and ſay, that I ſent nobody to " ſerve them; that I was only ſolicitous about my own name, " and

* The country expreſſion for the woods.

" and forgetful of my anceſtors? White men are not acquainted " with theſe circumſtances; but I now tell you, that you may " hear, and know, and inform your countrymen, why Cuſtoms " are made, and will be made, as long as black men continue to " poſſeſs their own country. The few that can be ſpared from " this neceſſary celebration, we ſell to the white men. And happy, " no doubt, are ſuch, when they find themſelves on the path " for Grigwhee, to be diſpoſed of to the Europeans. *We ſhall " ſtill drink water*,* ſay they to themſelves; *white men will not " kill us; and we may even avoid puniſhment, by ſerving our new " maſters with fidelity*."

All this, and much more to the ſame purpoſe, adds Mr. Abſon, was ſaid by the Dahoman Monarch, in my preſence, however incredible it may appear in England: and I can ſee no reaſon to doubt it, unleſs we ſuppoſe that common ſenſe is confined within narrower limits than experience ſhews it to be.

* Meaning, " We ſhall ſtill live."

HISTORY OF DAHOMY.

PART THE FOURTH.

CONTAINING

THE INTRODUCTION TO

THE LIFE

OF

WHEENOOHEW,

THE PRESENT KING.

CHAP. I.

New King's acceſſion—Speech—Expedition—Cruel treatment of the French *Governor.*

AS ſoon as Adahoonzou's remains were depoſited in Dahomy-houſe, at Abomey, *Wheenoohew*, his ſon and ſucceſſor, ruſhed into the palace, and put a ſtop to the carnage among the women. This Prince, who aſſumed the name of *Se-do-zaw, (wherever I rub I leave my ſcent)*, had three competitors, two of whom were

were brothers to the late King; and the third was a man who had been ſold and carried to Brazil, in Ahadee's time, but had been redeemed by Adahoonzou.

However, the ſtruggle for the ſucceſſion was not ſo violent as to occaſion the loſs of any lives; the Tamegan having taken every neceſſary precaution to prevent bloodſhed; and being indeed very active and attentive on this memorable occaſion.

No proviſions were expoſed to ſale during the ſpace of ſeveral days after Sedozaw's acceſſion, which afforded a pretext for the commiſſion of many diſorders; but the interference of the Tamegan ſoon put an end to all confuſion, and the new King promiſed to indulge his ſubjects with many privileges; on which account Whenoohew's reign commenced with conſiderable *éclat*. He redreſſed the grievances of the traders, by removing the oppreſſive reſtrictions which had been laid upon them by his father. He relieved them, in particular, from the intolerable impoſts, which had given the finiſhing ſtroke to commerce; and incorporated the revenue-officers, that had been employed to collect them, with the army.

The venerable Tamegan, who had been always reſpected by the Europeans, as well as by the natives, but who had been neglected in the late reign, became the favourite of Wheenoohew, who conſulted him on every important occaſion, honouring him with frequent perſonal viſits at the miniſter's own houſe; a mark of royal reſpect and condeſcenſion unknown in former reigns.

The

The ancient cuſtom, however of celebrating the memory of the deceaſed Dahoman Kings, by the effuſion of human blood, ſtill prevailed to ſuch a degree, that Wheenoohew, upon his firſt viſit to his father's tomb, took with him *forty-eight* men, tied, ordering, from time to time, one or two of them to be killed in the path, and ſaying, " He would walk in blood, all " the way from Calmina to Abomey, to ſee his father."

On Wheenoohew's firſt entry into the royal palace, he made a long ſpeech to his ſubjects, wherein he declared, " That he " was reſolved to adminiſter juſtice with a rigorous and impartial " hand; and adviſing them to keep clear of *palavers*; for that " he would kill or ſell all thoſe who ſhould be found to have " promoted unneceſſary litigation. He told them, that he had " adopted Ahadee's principles of governing, to which he ſhould " adhere; that he would hear no complaints but through his Ca- " boceers; and threatened to puniſh with inſtant death, the leaſt " whiſper to his women: a crime that had been too common " in his father's time. He decreed, that all trading men ſhould " pay the duties to their reſpective maſters, and not to him; for " he wanted no preſents but from his Caboceers, neither would " he beſtow any. They ſhould be allowed full liberty to trade; " and every one ſhould follow his own occupation, of whatever " denomination; but he cautioned all to avoid getting into " ſcrapes with him, ſince, if they did, they would be ſure to " repent of it; for he knew nobody, nor was he inclined to " make any new acquaintance."

1790. The firſt warlike expedition of Whenoohew was directed againſt *Baigee*, a Mahee province, from whence the Agaow

Agaow returned, with the head of the Caboceer and a few captives. Theſe were ſent to Abomey, to be ſlaughtered, for the purpoſe of filling up Adahoonzou's grave. The Agaow was ſick when he undertook this enterpriſe, and died ſoon after his return. The ſame day was likewiſe marked by the death of *Irookoo*, who had been one of the competitors for the throne.

About this time, the King of Dahomy was extremely irritated at the indecent and inſolent behaviour of the King of Ardrah, who had ſet apart a whole week for the celebration of Adahoonzou's death; during which, there had been one continued ſcene of drunkenneſs and revelling night and day, accompanied with an inceſſant diſcharge of cannon, and ſongs of execration to Adahoonzou's memory. This was ſo offenſive to Wheenoohew, that, upon being informed of the Ardrah *orgies*, he is ſaid to have ſhed tears. He ſummoned the Caboceers and people to the gates of his palace, told them of this flagrant affront, and ſaid, that if the King of Ardrah were not protected by Eyeo, he ſhould immediately ſend his whole force to chaſtiſe him for ſuch a ſcandalous inſult.

A new Agaow was ſoon after made, and the army ſent once more againſt Mahee; but the rivers at that time being ſwelled by the rains, it was obliged to retire, without effecting any thing. The Agaow having made the King acquainted with his ill ſucceſs, was not permitted to come home, but was ſent againſt the old Whydahs, the military officers at Grigwhee having been ordered to join him with all their forces.

This too was an expedition marked with no event, except the deſtruction of the plantations through which the troops had paſſed; who indiſcriminately devoured the fruits of the earth belonging to friend or foe.

A third unſucceſsful enterpriſe increaſed theſe evils to ſuch a degree, as to threaten a famine in that part of the kingdom which had been expoſed to ſuch predatory excurſions.

The next expedition was more ſucceſsful; the general having returned, though it does not appear from what country, with about *three hundred* priſoners, which were all killed at Abomey, to fill up Adahoonzou's grave: nor did theſe ſuffice; for another excurſion againſt the Mahees having produced *one hundred and ſeventy* captives, ſeveral of them were afterwards killed at Abomey, for the ſame purpoſe.

The new King, however, did not ſeem ſatisfied with theſe trifling ſucceſſes. It behoved him, after the example of his anceſtors, to provide liberally for the celebration of the firſt grand Cuſtoms for his father; and as this anniverſary was now near at hand, he ſuſpended two of his generals, the Poſſu and the Zoheino, and put others in their room, from whom he expected a better account of his enemies.

The army, after this, marched to a Mahee country, bordering on Ketoo, from whence they returned with upwards of *one thouſand* priſoners, which are reſerved for the ſolemnization of theſe grand Cuſtoms.*

About

* The ſolemn coronation, if we may ſo call it, of the King, was deferred, till the grand Cuſtoms, which were to be held in the beginning of the approaching

About this time, Monſ. Gourg, the French Governor, having become obnoxious to the natives, his expulſion from the country was determined upon, and put into execution in a manner as cruel as unprecedented.

This gentleman, who had the misfortune to loſe an arm in the ſervice of his country, was, not many months after the acceſſion of Wheenoohew, one afternoon, ſeized between the Engliſh and French forts, by a party, under the direction of a man, called *Alindahoo*, who, after inſulting him in the French language, and even beating him, carried him to the *Captain's* † *tree*.

Monſ. Gourg was there bound, and carried from thence to the beach, where he was obliged to remain all night on the ſand, expoſed to the muſquitos and ſand flies, till five o'clock next morning, when he was thrown into a canoe, in a manner never practiſed even towards a black man.

The ſurf on the beach, and the breakers on the bar, on this occaſion, happened to be ſo high, that it was deemed, by the

approaching year; as alſo another ceremony, which was neceſſary to be performed, namely, his inauguration at Alladah; where, according to cuſtom, he was to be inveſted with a fine *coat*, as a token of his ſovereignty over that kingdom. This ſolemnity, which may take place before the other, had been retarded, on account of the indiſpoſition of the Tamegan, who had been ſeized with a paralytic diſorder, from which he was then recovering; and it was expected, that he would quickly accompany the King to Alladah, in order to make a ſpeech on that occaſion.

† A large tree, not far from the fort, where the Viceroy receives the captains of ſhips.

canoemen, impracticable to put to ſea; and in fact, no other canoe durſt attempt the bar, during that and ſeveral ſucceeding days.

The boatſwain of the canoe remonſtrated in vain; the canoe was puſhed off the beach; and this unfortunate gentleman was afloat three hours, drenched with repeated breaches of the ſurf, before he got over the bar. At laſt the canoe paſſed it, and he got ſafe on board a ſmall veſſel belonging to the Gold Coaſt. The canoe, however, was overſet on her return.

It does not appear, that the natives had any reaſons, ſufficiently ſtrong, to warrant this violent behaviour. Mr. Gourg indeed had been accuſed of haughty and ſupercilious behaviour. He made no trade himſelf; and he did not receive the traders, nor even the Caboceers, with that ceremony and reſpect which had been always cuſtomary; and to which indeed they had been entitled, in conſequence of the courteſy and politeneſs they had always ſhewn towards the white men. It was reported, that his own officers had conſpired againſt him, and had done him ill offices with the King.

However that may be, this cruel treatment ſeems to have affected his health; for he afterwards died on board the ſhip *Rouen*, during his paſſage towards Cape François.

This is the ſecond inſtance of the expulſion of a French governor from Whydah; Monſ. *Cuillie* having experienced a ſimilar

ſimilar fate, though with leſs humiliating circumſtances, about the year 1762, upon a charge of having ſold contraband articles to the enemies of Dahomy.

A tranſaction happened about this period, which is worthy notice. Eyeo, powerful as we have ſeen it, appears to be tributary to a neigbouring and more powerful Prince, called *Tappah*,* of whoſe hiſtory little is known. The King of Eyeo, deſirous, it ſeems, to throw off the yoke, had ordered the buffalo's hide to be twice trodden, in order to give Tappah a hearty drubbing. His army however, numerous as it was, met with a complete overthrow, and was under the neceſſity of ſubmitting to the victor's own terms, having loſt thirteen umbrellas in the action.

1791. In the months of January, February, and March, the ſolemnization of the grand Cuſtoms, and of the King's coronation, took place; the ceremonies of which laſted the whole three months, and were marked almoſt every day with human blood. Captain Fayrer, and particularly Mr. Hogg, Governor of Apollonia, were preſent; and both affirm, that not leſs than 500 men, women, and children, fell as victims

* *Tappa*, from its vicinity to *Gago*, ſeems to be *Inta*, a name given to *Aſſiente* by ſome of our geographers. It is a very powerful kingdom, on the S. W. border of Eyeo, or Gago. Probably 'Ta-pa may mean Ta— or Inta-men; but this is only conjecture. J. F.

tims to revenge and oſtentation, under the ſhew of piety: many more were expected to fall; but a ſudden demand for ſlaves having thrown the lure of avarice before the King, he, like his anceſtors, ſhewed he was not inſenſible to its temptation.

FINIS.